The New Testament Church
Its Teaching and
Its Scriptures

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To My Wife
Whose Sympathetic Coöperation
Made the Preparation of the Manuscript
Possible
This Volume Is Affectionately
Dedicated

FOREWORD

The twenty-four chapters of this course are a study of the development of the New Testament. They will show how the New Testament grew out of the life of the Christian Church, whose foundation was the life and work of Jesus Christ. The course will deal with the history of the New Testament Church as this history is related to the development of the books of the New Testament and explains them. The chapters will also discuss the outstanding Christian truths and principles which are revealed and recorded in the New Testament. This study aims to enable the student to teach in a Sunday-school class any particular lesson from the New Testament on the larger background of the whole New Testament and of New Testament Christianity.

The books of the New Testament are vitally related to the growth of the New Testament Church, to its spread geographically, and to the developing expression of the great Christian truths which Jesus Christ himself revealed to his disciples and which he said the Holy Spirit would more fully interpret to them. The Acts will therefore be the basic book of the study, because this book tells the story of the New Testament Church and thus provides the historical background of the New Testament books and their teaching. The other books of the New Testament will be considered as they fit into this background of the New Testament Church as it obeyed Christ's own command to bear witness to

him and to teach all things whatsoever he had commanded.

These studies assume the correctness of the New Testament narratives and are based upon the New Testament books as they now stand. It is not the purpose to discuss critical questions but to make the New Testament, as it stands, speak for itself. The purpose of the course is to consider the message of the New Testament as we have it.

The course is not a course on Christianity or the Church; it is a course on the Christianity and the Church of the New Testament. This should be kept clearly in mind. The New Testament text which is used is that of the Standard American Edition of the Revised Version of the Bible.

The plan of the chapters should be noted. Immediately under the title of the chapter will be found a series of New Testament references. These passages are for reading and study, and much of the value of the course will be lost unless the student does this reading. The purpose of the course is to enable the New Testament to speak for itself, and this end can be achieved only if the student will read the passages indicated.

The problem of the chapter is stated to set the student to thinking. The problem should be read before the assigned Scripture passages are considered. The student can then read these passages with the purpose of finding for himself the solution of the problem.

The discussion in the body of the chapter develops the subject under consideration. This discussion is

not for the purpose of imparting mere information, but aims to encourage the student to think the problem through for himself. All references should be looked up by the student.

The last section of the chapter is "Questions for Study and Assignment." All students should read every one of these questions and give them serious thought. It is not to be expected, however, that any one student can do the work necessary to enable him to answer all the questions fully. The teacher should assign questions to members of the class for study or research and report. If the teacher does not assign particular questions to a student, the student should on his own initiative choose at least one of the questions requiring special research, selecting the question which he considers most important, or the question in which he is most interested, or the question for which he can secure the best sources of information, or the question about which he feels that he knows least.

As new chapters are taken up, previous chapters should be reviewed so that the student will appreciate the development of the New Testament Church and its sacred Scriptures.

At the close of each chapter is a list of the books of the New Testament. This list will help to keep before the student the names of all the books of the New Testament in their usual order. As these books are discussed in the chapters they are printed in bold-faced type. This will help the student to follow the development of the New Testament with greater ease. This, however, does not indicate the

exact order of the books according to their dates, but their relation to the story which the course tells.

It will be observed that the chapters can readily be taken in pairs if teachers should desire to cover the course in twelve lessons instead of twenty-four. The chapters have been planned with this in view, in case it should seem to be necessary.

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CHAPTER I

HOW DID THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH BEGIN?

Scripture Material to Be Read: Luke 1: 1–4; Acts 1: 1 to 2: 42

The Problems of the Chapter. We live in the twentieth century and are known as Christians. Our Christianity and the Christian Church are inseparably connected. We usually profess our faith in Christ by uniting with the Church. We find Christian fellowship and inspiration and instruction in the Church. Our Christianity is also closely connected with the sacred Scriptures, especially the New Testament Scriptures. How did the Church begin? What was its character at the beginning? What was its relation to Jesus and to the New Testament Scriptures? In this chapter we are to begin our search fo the answers to these questions.

The Book of The Acts. The Acts, which is the basic book of our study at the beginning, and the book which records the early story of the Church, is one of the finest pieces of historical writing which is known to literature. The author, we know, is Luke, the Gentile physician, traveler, and Christian, who wrote the Third Gospel. This is evident from the comparison of Luke 1: 1–4 and Acts 1: 1, 2, and is confirmed by the tradition of the Church.

The author's method in writing his history should be noted. His method marks him as a true historian. Luke undertook to write a book because there was danger of confusion concerning the fundamental facts of the Christian religion, owing to the unreliability of tradition and to the appearance of accounts from unauthoritative sources. His purpose was to write a book which would be thoroughly reliable and trustworthy, so that conviction might be based upon it. His historical materials were examined with the utmost care before they were accepted. He has noted three sources of his material: testimony, records, and personal observation. It was his policy to draw from the testimony of trustworthy witnesses. See Luke 1: 2. He made it his business to trace traditions to their source and prove them. Luke 1: 3. He demanded convincing historical evidence, Acts 1: 3, which would provide a firm ground of assurance concerning the truth, Luke 1: 4. His account of Paul's conversion, Acts 9: 1–19, was no doubt based upon Paul's own account of the occurrence, which Luke heard often from the apostle's own lips. In some cases he drew from authoritative records. The genealogy of Jesus was no doubt based upon a careful search of genealogical lists. In Acts 15: 23–29, he quoted a letter which was preserved in the records of the Church, and in Acts 23: 26–30, he quoted a letter which may have been sent to Rome as part of the official record when Paul's case was referred to the court of Cæsar. He also wrote out of personal experience, for he was an observer of much which he describes and narrates. Certain sections of The Acts,

by the use of "we" or "us" in the narrative, indicate that the author was a member of the party of whose experiences he tells. Acts 16: 10–17; 20: 5 to 21: 18; 27: 1 to 28: 16.

Historical Accuracy. The accuracy of Luke as a historian has been wonderfully vindicated. Incidental reference to titles of officials, to geographical locations, and to historical settings have stood the test of the most exhaustive investigation. Modern research has established the historical exactness of The Acts. In "Luke the Historian in the Light of Research," A. T. Robertson discusses the historical accuracy of both the Gospel by Luke and The Acts.

Only a few instances of historical accuracy may be mentioned here. In Acts 13: 7, the governor of Cyprus is called "proconsul." The accuracy of this title was often doubted because of a statement of Strabo, a Greek geographer and historian who lived from about 63 B.C. to about A.D. 24. He was a great traveler. His history is largely lost but his "*Geographica*" has come down to us in seventeen volumes almost complete. Strabo described Cyprus as an imperatorial province administered by a legate. When the New Testament historian spoke of Sergius Paulus as "proconsul," Luke's accuracy was doubted. But in the latter part of the nineteenth century General di Cesnola discovered at Soli, Cyprus, an inscription in Greek, reading, "Under the proconsul Paulus." In Acts 17: 8, the city officials of Thessalonica are called "polyarchs" in Greek, or "rulers of the city." This designation was said to be found in

no ancient writing, but it has been found in an old archway in the modern city of Salonika, with the names of seven polyarchs. In Acts, ch. 19, Luke used a number of technical titles in referring to officials of Ephesus. Among them are "townclerk," "Asiarchs," "shrine maker." In inscriptions unearthed between 1863 and 1874, these titles are found again and again. An experienced sailor, Captain James Smith, followed the course described by Luke in his account of the shipwreck in Acts, ch. 27, and has shown that the account is accurate in the most minute details.

The Date of The Acts. Of course ancient books like those of the New Testament do not bear a date of publication or copyright as do our modern printed volumes. Usually the only way to determine when these books were written is by judging their date by their contents in relation to the background of history. The story of The Acts ends with Paul's two years' imprisonment in Rome. If these two years were from A.D. 61 to A.D. 63, the book must have been written some time not earlier than A.D. 63. And from the fact that the book makes no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70, the conclusion has been drawn that the book must have been written before that time. It is probably safe to say that The Acts was written some time in the seventh decade of the first century A.D.

The Contents of the Book. A good portion of the story of The Acts will be considered somewhat in detail in these studies. It is sufficient at this

point to indicate that the book tells the story of the New Testament Church from its beginning on the day of Pentecost until the arrival of Paul in Rome. The spread of the Church is traced geographically from Jerusalem through Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe, to Rome; the growth of the Church organically from the disciples under the leadership of the Twelve to the scattered self-governing individual churches which recognized the authority of the apostles and the leadership of the mother church in Jerusalem; and the development of the Church doctrinally from the testimony of the apostles to the Jews at Pentecost to the proclamation of the same gospel of salvation by faith in Christ to Jews and Gentiles alike.

Christ in the Church. The outstanding fact about the New Testament Church is that it was the Church of Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke of it as "my church," Matt. 16: 18. Without him there could have been no New Testament Church. He was its Founder, its Builder, its Head, its Center, its Life. The whole story of The Acts is the story of what Jesus wrought in and through those who were related to him through living faith.

When Jesus was crucified, the disciples were hopeless, Luke 24: 21, but the reality of his resurrection, which was proved beyond a doubt, Acts 1: 3, revived the hopes of the apostles and their closest associates, led them to plan the work which Jesus had given them, Acts 1: 4, and to reorganize the Twelve to carry on the work when the Spirit should come, Acts 1: 15–26.

The explanation of their faith, their loyalty, and their zeal was Christ. Back of the Church lay the personal experience of the apostles who had been with Jesus and learned of him. They were guided and controlled and impelled by the teaching and example of Jesus. What they said was what Jesus had told them to say. What they did was what Jesus had taught them to do. Their great purpose was through their testimony to lead others to know Jesus as they knew him, to believe in Jesus as they believed in him, to follow Jesus as they tried to follow him.

The Day of Pentecost. The New Testament Church began its work on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus and ten days after his ascension. For this day the disciples had been waiting according to Jesus' directions, Acts 1: 4. On this day the Spirit came upon the Church, Acts 2: 1–4, and Jesus' promise was fulfilled. The "other comforter" had come to empower and guide the Church. The "Spirit of Jesus" was in their midst.

The Universality of the Gospel. Pentecost was known as the "feast of weeks," and the Jewish law required the attendance of all males at the feast. Jerusalem was therefore crowded with Jews not only from Judea and Galilee but also from distant lands whence the faithful had returned in obedience to the law. This explains the presence of men from many nations. Though born and brought up in foreign lands, the Jews were taught to keep the law and thousands had come to Jerusalem for the feast. What

happened that day, Acts 2: 5–11, was virtually a prophecy, a forecast of the Church's work. These believers in God from many lands heard the apostles speaking in the tongues of the countries from which they had come. As forerunners of the Church they were to go back to these lands again to tell the message of Jesus, and some day, in all lands and in the languages of the people, in obedience to the command of Christ, the Church was to proclaim the message of salvation through faith in Christ crucified and risen and ascended.

The Message of the Church. The day of Pentecost was a prophecy of the world-wide ministry of the Church, but it was also an illustration of the method of the Church in the carrying out of its mission. Peter was the spokesman for the Twelve. He declared that the New Testament Church and its message and its work were the fulfillment of the Old Testament teaching. Acts 2: 16–31. Then he gave his personal testimony to Christ, in which the rest of the disciples shared. Acts 2: 32–36. Then he proclaimed the great message of the Church, the message of salvation through faith in Christ. Acts 2: 37–40. So, throughout its history, the true Church has been a Church which bore witness to the Christ whom the apostles knew.

Requirements of Church Members. The day of Pentecost also illustrated the requirements for membership in the Church of Christ: acceptance of the gospel, confession of faith, and baptism, Acts 2:

41. It also gave an example of loyal Church membership, characterized by growth in knowledge, sharing in the support of the work of the Church, the observance of the Lord's Supper, and attendance upon meetings for worship and prayer, Acts 2: 42.

Summary. Thus at the very beginning of The Acts, the purpose of which is to tell the story of the New Testament Church, we find a preliminary statement of the place of Christ in the Church, the essential work of the Holy Spirit, the great world-wide mission of the Church, the importance of witnessing for Christ, the gospel of salvation as the Church's message, the requirements for Church membership, and the obligations and duties which Church membership involves. All these points will be more fully developed in the story which Luke has thus introduced.

Questions for Study and Assignment[1]

1. Why do we identify the author of The Acts with the author of the Third Gospel?

2. How was Luke qualified to write a history of the Church in the days of the apostles?

3. Make a list of evidences of the accuracy of Luke as a historian. See A. T. Robertson's "Luke the Historian in the Light of Research."

4. Study Acts 1: 1 to 2: 41 with a view to noting each incident or reference that illustrates the Christ-centered character of Christianity and of the Church at the time of Pentecost.

5. In the Apostolic Church what was the place of personal testimony to the historical facts concerning Jesus?

6. What were the requirements for Church membership when the Church began its work at Pentecost? Compare these requirements with the requirements for Church membership to-day.

[1]See Foreword.

7. Prepare a map and locate the places represented by the multitude who heard the gospel on the day of Pentecost. What is the significance of the results of this geographical study?

The Books of The New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER II

THE MESSAGE OF THE TWELVE

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts, chs. 2 to 4

The Problem of the Chapter. Christianity is a religion with a message. The commission of Jesus to his Church was to "go" and "teach." Matt. 28: 18–20; Acts 1: 8. The Twelve whom Jesus appointed to be leaders in the Church were called apostles, which means "sent out." They had been especially trained to go out to preach the gospel. Mark 3: 14. The Church is primarily a teaching institution. Its missionaries are sent out to declare the gospel, to deliver a message, to teach truth. Christianity appeals to the emotions and it influences character and conduct, but these results are attained through a message. Truth is in order to godliness, but truth is the fundamental thing in Christianity because it is the foundation of godliness. The apostles were therefore primarily teachers. They were to make something known. They were witnesses.

In this lesson we are to seek the answer to the question, "What did the apostles teach?" In the study of this course we shall find that the whole New Testament is an elaboration of the teaching of the Twelve, which was the message that Jesus gave them to teach; but in this lesson we shall try to discover what the message of the apostles was at the very first. What can we learn about the teaching of

the Twelve from the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost and from the addresses of the apostles in the Temple and before the sanhedrin?

The Religious and Historical Background of the Apostles' Teaching. The sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost was not an attempt to make known to an audience religious and historical facts of which they were entirely ignorant. Peter talked mostly about things with which his audience was rather familiar. He appealed to their knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures and of facts of common experience in recent days, for, as Paul once said concerning Jesus' life and teaching, these things were not done "in a corner." Jesus Christ was a well-known figure, and his teaching and the outstanding events of his life were common knowledge. Back of what Peter said, therefore, lay the Old Testament and the life and teaching of Jesus. His chief concern was to interpret facts. He wanted to show his hearers what the Old Testament meant and what the life and character and work of Jesus meant. The great facts were more or less familiar to his audience; the meaning of these facts would be new to them.

The Sermon at Pentecost. (1) Old Testament Prophecy. The multitudes on the day of Pentecost were amazed by the fact that, although they had come from many lands where many languages were spoken, each language group heard the apostles speaking in the tongue of their native place. Some said that the strange tongues were the babbling of drunken men.

Peter therefore undertook to explain the meaning of what the people saw and heard. He declared that what they saw and heard was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. This indicates that he knew that his hearers were familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. Otherwise what he said would have had no force for them. He declared that the great day to which the prophets had looked forward had at last come. He quoted Joel 2: 28–32, which in the Hebrew Old Testament is a separate chapter of the book. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' followers and the power to speak in strange tongues was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, and now was the time when, according to the prophet, salvation was offered to those who would look to God for it. He quoted also from Psalm 16: 8–11, and declared that those words were not fulfilled in the experience of David, but were fulfilled in Christ. Acts 2: 25–32. He said also that the ascension of Jesus had fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 110. Acts 2: 34–36. The apostles supported their testimony, therefore, by appealing to the Old Testament Scriptures which the Jews had been taught were the Word of God. The New Testament Church, then, taught that the Old Testament was the Word of God which was fulfilled in the life and work of Jesus and was to be further fulfilled through the ministry of the Church in the world.

(2) The Facts About Jesus. The references of Peter to the Old Testament were intended to open the minds of his hearers to accept his interpretation of the facts about Jesus. The apostles were called

to be Christ's witnesses, to declare what they had seen and heard. What, then, did the apostles think were the most important facts about Jesus which they were to declare? What were the great essentials concerning Jesus which they proclaimed? No doubt Peter's sermon is given in The Acts in mere outline, but the outline would certainly indicate the chief points in his sermon. What are the facts about Jesus which Peter declared in Acts 2: 14–40? Read this passage and note the points in his teaching for yourself.

(*a*) Jesus, Peter said, first of all, is "Jesus of Nazareth." Acts 2: 22. This implies the whole background of Jesus' life as a man. He was the Jesus who was brought up in Nazareth and who became known as the great Teacher. (*b*) Peter declared also that Jesus was the great Miracle Worker. In Peter's day this did not need to be proved. Everyone knew Jesus as the one who had wrought mighty works and wonders and signs. Acts 2: 22. (*c*) Then Peter emphasized the death of Jesus; he was Christ crucified. (*d*) Then followed the resurrection, and the ascension. (*e*) Jesus is therefore the Lord of Glory, and the Holy Spirit is the gift of Jesus. Acts 2: 33–36. Run through this paragraph again and note once more the outstanding facts concerning Jesus which Peter proclaimed in this first declaration of the gospel by the Church.

(3) Conclusions About Jesus. Thus far Peter had witnessed to facts about Jesus. Many of these the multitude knew well enough. Of some of these facts the apostles were witnesses and in support of

these, namely, the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, they gave their testimony. But what conclusions did Peter draw from these facts? Teaching is not merely stating facts, however clearly they may be stated. Teaching is helping the pupil to interpret facts in a vital way. Now note Peter's interpretation of these facts about Jesus, Acts 2: 36-39. Observe that Peter declared the Messiahship of Jesus: he is both "Lord and Christ." Jesus was exalted to the place of supreme authority: he is Lord. Peter declared also that Jesus is the Messiah, the Deliverer of the Jews. To this Jesus—crucified, risen, exalted—Peter's hearers owed allegiance, for they were to be baptized into his name, that is, publicly to declare their faith in him and loyalty to him and their purpose to follow him. Peter also exhorted his hearers to "save themselves." Join this with the quotation in Acts 2: 21, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," and v. 38, "Unto the remission of your sins," and it is plain that Peter proclaimed Jesus as the Deliverer from sin, or the Saviour. "With many other words he testified, and exhorted them" so it is evident that he explained more fully the significance of what has been so briefly outlined here by Luke, but these points are clearly the heart of Peter's message. He taught that Jesus, the story of whose life and teaching we know through the Gospels, was the great Miracle Worker, who died on the cross of Calvary, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, and is to be accepted as Saviour from sin and to be obeyed and followed as Lord.

In the Temple. The apostles had not only listened to Jesus' teaching; they had also caught his spirit. So when Peter and John went into the Temple, they were moved with sympathy for the lame man at the gate and in Jesus' name healed him. Acts 3: 1–10. The gathering of the crowd to see the man who had been so miraculously healed gave Peter an opportunity to preach to them. It was not yet evident that the followers of Jesus were to be a separate sect. They were Jews who believed that Jesus was the Christ and the Saviour, and who wished to persuade all the Jews to believe as they believed. The Temple was still the disciples' place of worship, the house of God. So Peter preached Jesus to the multitudes who gathered in the Temple. Study what he said. Acts 3: 12–26. Note that what he taught at Pentecost is now taught again, in a little different way and with elaboration in places but with the same great facts and conclusions. The God they preached is the God the Jews knew, the God of the Old Testament, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. Their God had glorified Jesus who was the Servant referred to in the Old Testament. He had been crucified, but God had raised him from the dead. Of Jesus' death his hearers knew; of his resurrection the apostles were witnesses. It was this risen Jesus who had made the lame man strong. Then Peter proclaimed Jesus as the Saviour from sin. Again he supported his claims by quoting the Old Testament Scriptures which he declared Jesus had fulfilled. Even Jesus' suffering was a fulfillment of the Scriptures. Jesus fulfilled the promises of Moses and of

Samuel and the prophets who followed him. Through Jesus, also, the promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled.

Before the Council. Brought before the Jewish council, or sanhedrin, the highest court of the Jews, again Peter declared the chief facts concerning Jesus: that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, that he rose again, and that he is the living Lord whose power had healed the lame man, that he is the One whose coming had been prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures, and that in him, and in him alone, is salvation to be found. Acts 4: 10–12.

Summary. There can be no doubt concerning what the apostles taught. They declared not only that their teaching was in harmony with the Old Testament Scriptures but that the life and ministry of Jesus explained and fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures. In fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures Jesus of Nazareth lived and taught and wrought his signs; he was crucified but rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven; he sent his Spirit into the world; and he is the only Saviour from sin.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Make an outline or syllabus of Peter's sermon at Pentecost.
2. Indicate the parts of Peter's sermon at Pentecost that would not readily be understood by hearers who knew nothing of the Old Testament or its religion, or who knew nothing of the current reports about Jesus.
3. Where can present-day readers of Peter's sermon at Pentecost find the information which the multitudes possessed and which will make his sermon intelligible to them?

4. Which of the four Gospels is generally said to give the personal testimony of Peter concerning Jesus? Why? Consult a Bible dictionary under "Gospels."

5. Make a list of the main points concerning Jesus which found a place in the preaching and teaching of the apostles at Pentecost, in the Temple, and before the sanhedrin.

6. What truths or doctrines of the Christian religion did the apostles teach?

7. Make a list of the most important teachings concerning Jesus which you have heard taught in the Church and compare the list with your answer to Question 5.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
- According to Matthew
- According to Mark
- According to Luke
- According to John

The Acts

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews

James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER III

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 2: 41 to 4: 37

The Problems of the Chapter. At Pentecost the body of believers in Jesus, known as the Church, took up its work. What was that work? What different kinds of things did it do? Is the work of the Church to-day a development of the work begun at Pentecost, or is it a departure from the work of the Church at Pentecost? Is the Church doing less or more to-day? Why?

The Ministry of Teaching. The preceding chapter emphasized the thought that the Church, as an organized body of believers, was an institution with a message. Jesus' commission to the Church was, "Go, teach." The most important heritage of the Church was its gospel, the message of salvation through Christ.

Because the Church is a teaching institution, teachers have always been given an important place in the Church. "Teaching" is a word which may well be underscored in reading the New Testament. So we find that the believers who were won by the preaching of Peter and of the rest of the Twelve, "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching," Acts 2: 42.

The teaching of the Church was primarily the

gospel. This may readily be concluded from the account of the early Church in The Acts, and also from epistles of the New Testament which were written to the various churches and Christian workers. In teaching the gospel, the apostles assumed knowledge previously acquired by those whom they taught. The first members of the Church were Jews who had been taught the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, who had been brought up in Jewish homes, and who had been instructed in the synagogue schools. Thus they had the religious instruction of the home and the synagogue. The work of the Church was to organize this knowledge about the central fact of Christ and his work as Saviour. The recorded examples of the teaching of the apostles, as they went from place to place and taught in the synagogues, show this.

But what would the apostles and missionaries do when they went to places where there was no instruction in the true religion in the homes? What would they do when they had to deal with people who had not been taught the Old Testament Scriptures and had not been instructed in the synagogue schools? Because the great task of the Church was the task of teaching, the Church would have to provide the necessary instruction to carry out its purpose. The Church must ground converts in the faith. Like the apostles in dealing with the Jews, the Church to-day assumes the education which the young receive in home and school, but whenever there is lack of this elementary education, the Church must itself provide it. In mission lands, therefore,

we find the missionaries establishing schools for the education of the people and particularly for the education of its future leaders. In our own country most of the colleges were established by the Church for the education of its own leaders.

The Church in the days of the apostles made provision for the education of its members and of its leadership, and the modern educational work of the Church is altogether in harmony with the apostolic example.

The Ministry of Worship. Worship also had a large place in the ministry of the Church. The early converts of Pentecost continued stedfastly in "the prayers." Acts 2: 42. This has been explained as "the prayers and Psalms of the old Jewish ritual, together with new supplications in which Jesus was invoked as Lord." These were services of worship. The believers also worshiped in the Temple. Acts 2: 46. There the apostles went at the hour of prayer. Acts 3: 1. When the apostles were released from prison, a meeting for prayer and praise was held. Acts 4: 23–31.

As the New Testament Church availed itself of the education of the Old Testament Judaism, so the New Testament Church brought over also the Jewish practices of worship. They worshiped God with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. They engaged in prayer. Jesus himself had given the disciples a guide in prayer. Matt. 6: 9–15. The followers of Jesus worshiped in the Temple and in the synagogues and in private homes. When they were driven

from the synagogues they began to provide their own places of worship.

The custom of having a church building for services of prayer and praise and the preaching of the Word is the natural outgrowth of the practice of the Church from the very first.

The Ministry of the Sacraments. From the very beginning the Christian Church has observed two special ceremonies, appointed by Christ himself. These are the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Peter taught that baptism—which was the sign of repentance, of cleansing from sin, of faith in Christ, and of loyalty to him—was to be administered to those who united with the Church. It was the sacrament of initiation. Acts 2: 38, 41. So Saul of Tarsus was baptized. Acts 9: 18. So also was the Ethiopian baptized when he wished to declare his faith in Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. Acts 8: 38. In harmony with this practice at the very beginning of the New Testament Church, the sacrament of baptism is still the initiatory rite of the Christian Church.

A second sacrament was observed in the Church. This was the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This sacrament had been established by Jesus himself. Luke 22: 14–20. It was often referred to as "the breaking of bread." From the very first this sacrament was observed in the New Testament Church as a memorial of Christ's death. Compare Acts 20: 7 and I Cor. 11: 17–34.

The Church's observance of these two sacraments

to-day is a practice which has come down directly from the Church of the apostles, and can be traced back to the day of Pentecost and to the command of Jesus.

The Ministry to Temporal Needs. Gratitude to God for his unspeakable gift of Christ as Saviour so filled the hearts of believers that their thankfulness and joy overflowed in thoughtful and unselfish service to others. Spontaneously the believers brought their possessions into a common treasury out of which the needs of all could be met. They fed the hungry and clothed the naked and visited the sick, thus fulfilling the teaching of Jesus. The Church became known in Jerusalem as an organization which ministered to the necessities of the poor. Acts 2: 44–47; 4: 32, 34–37. The New Testament Church felt that it could not do otherwise. The love of God prompted them to show their own love in sympathetic and generous ministry to the temporal needs of others. Compare I John 3: 17.

To-day the poor of the community are ministered to largely through charitable societies. A good part of the funds of these societies comes from givers whose spirit of kindness is largely the fruit of the ministry of the Church. But these funds are not administered directly by the Church. The workers also in these charitable organizations are largely recruited from the Church. Is it a loss or a gain when secular organizations instead of the Church take charge of the ministry of relief to the poor of the community?

The Ministry of Healing. There were miracles of healing in the New Testament Church at its very beginning. Acts 2: 43; 3: 1–10. These miracles of healing were prompted by sympathy, and they were in accord with the example of Jesus, but they were signs of God's approval of the Church and its gospel message, and of the apostles as the authorized representatives of Jesus. Not all the sick were healed. Paul himself, who at times wrought miracles of healing, did not heal some of his dearest friends, and his own "thorn in the flesh" was not removed. The true conception is that the Church ministered to the sick, sometimes healing disease, but always giving comfort and sympathy and aid.

The medical-missionary work of the Church to-day is parallel to this ministry of the Church in the days of the apostles. To the people of non-Christian lands the wonders wrought by physicians and surgeons in their ministry in the name of Christ are as marvelous as were the miracles of the apostles. Certainly the medical missionaries are prompted by the same motives as were the apostles, and their healing ministry in a similar way opens the door for the preaching of the gospel. Following the example of the New Testament Church, the Church to-day has its hospitals and its nurses and its ministry to the sick. In non-Christian lands the first hospitals are established by the Christian missionary. The Christian Church becomes known for its ministry to the sick.

Summary. The Church, as it began its work at Pentecost and carried it on immediately after Pen-

tecost, gave first place to its ministry of preaching and teaching. It maintained its services of worship and its observance of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. It also ministered to temporal needs, especially of its members, and carried on a ministry of healing. We find, therefore, that the Church, while putting the ministry of the Word and of prayer first, sought to minister to every need of man which was not met through some other agency.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. With what different educational situation would the Church have to deal among the Jews of Jerusalem and among the Gentiles of heathen lands? What corresponding difference would there be in the Church's educational ministry of teaching?

2. How far did the Apostolic Church use the worship facilities and materials of the Jewish religion? When would it become necessary for the Christian Church to make full provision for its own ministry of worship?

3. What were the sacraments of the Apostolic Church? What place do the sacraments have in the Church to-day?

4. Why would the New Testament Church have to provide for its own poor? Is the Church's obligation to the poor of the community greater or less to-day? How does the Church's ministry to the temporal necessities of the community affect the community's attitude toward the Church?

5. Compare the apostles' ministry of healing and the Church's ministry of healing to-day. What is the difference in the testimony to Christ of community hospitals and dispensaries in Christian lands and the distinctively missionary hospitals in non-Christian lands?

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH ORGANIZES FOR ITS MINISTRY

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 1: 15–26; 6: 1–6

The Problem of the Chapter. It is significant that the Church is often called in the New Testament "the body of Christ." This means that Jesus is the Church's life, and that this life organizes about it a body through which to express itself and do its work. The Church, therefore, is to be viewed as alive, much as a human body is alive. We may expect it to adapt itself to its task and to its environment. The Church as an organization grew in numbers, but it also grew into its work. Jesus did not hand over to the Church a completed organization thoroughly worked out, any more than God gives to the plant a complete organization. He gives the seed and in that seed is the potential plant which will be formed as the seed develops in its environment. The Holy Spirit was the controlling influence in the organization of the New Testament Church for its work. Thus the body of Christ, so far as its external organization is concerned, was developed. In this chapter we are to try to discover what were the beginnings of organization in the Christian Church.

Jesus and Organization. That the apostles brought organization into the Church is not sur-

prising, for as disciples of Jesus they must have learned to lay emphasis upon organization. Jesus was an organizer. When the Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy Jesus, he appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them forth to preach. Mark 3: 6, 14. When the Pharisees and their allies organized their campaign against Jesus, Jesus organized his own campaign for the achievement of his great purpose.

When there were five thousand to be fed, Jesus had them sit down on the ground in companies, thus not only preventing the confusion which would be caused by the people moving about, but also facilitating the orderly distribution of the food to the companies or ranks. Then he made the twelve apostles his directors in the distribution. In this way, by a simple organization, at the time of the emergency, he saw that the great undertaking was put through with ease and dispatch. Again, when he sent out the Seventy, he sent them out two by two. He planned carefully to cover in a systematic way the territory he wished to reach. So when he planned to have the Church carry out his Great Commission, he made the Twelve, whom he had taught and trained, the leaders in the work of the Church, sent the Holy Spirit to be the guide of the Church, and depended upon the trained apostles, under the guidance of the Spirit, to organize the Church to meet every emergency. This, we find, is exactly what took place in the New Testament Church, as we follow its story as Luke tells it in The Acts.

The Twelve. At the beginning the Church was under the direction of the Twelve whom Jesus had himself taught and trained. Mark 3: 13–19; Eph. 4: 11. That the Twelve were the nucleus of the Church's organization was recognized by the apostles themselves. While they were waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit, according to the command and promise of Jesus, they must have been thinking of the work of the Church, and particularly of the organization which was to carry on the work, for Peter called attention to the fact that the disloyalty and death of Judas had disrupted their organization. Jesus had appointed twelve to be leaders and directors in the Church, and now there were but eleven. Accordingly he suggested that they should proceed with a plan to secure a substitute for Judas, to complete the organization Jesus had in mind. Matthias was therefore chosen by lot. Acts 1: 15–26.

That the apostleship was a temporary office in the Church is evident from the requirements for this office, Acts 1: 21, 22. An apostle must have been with Jesus from the beginning, so that he could be a first-hand witness of what Jesus had said and done. It was necessary also that he should have continued with Jesus until his death and resurrection, so that he might witness to these two great facts in the life and ministry of Jesus. The apostleship, therefore, could not be a permanent office in the Church, but the Twelve constituted the nucleus of the organization at the beginning of the New Testament Church. Paul was the special apostle to the Gentiles. While he had not followed with Jesus from the beginning,

he received his gospel message directly from Christ, and through his vision of Jesus on the way to Damascus became a witness to his resurrection. I Cor. 9: 1; 15: 1–10; Acts 9: 1–9. The term "apostle" was sometimes used in a less technical sense in the New Testament, the word having in these instances the ordinary sense of "one sent." Thus it is applied to Barnabas. Compare Acts 13: 3 and 14: 4, 14.

In Chapter III we saw that the great task of the Church was the work of teaching. Accordingly the apostles were primarily teachers, for they had been with Jesus and learned of him, and they were witnesses of the resurrection. They were able to pass on to others the teaching of Jesus, to tell of his life and ministry, and to witness to his resurrection. So the Church, as it began its ministry, was organized first for its primary task of teaching under the leadership and direction and authority of the apostles.

The worship of the Church and the administering of the sacraments were also under the direction of the apostles. They called the people to repentance and baptism. They led in the observance of the Lord's Supper. They had direction of the ministry of the word and the prayers. Thus the very simple organization of the Church under the spiritual leadership of the Twelve met the needs immediately following Pentecost.

Deacons. The Church soon faced a new situation, however. As we saw in Chapter III, the Church not only maintained its ministry of teaching and worship and the sacraments, but it had its

ministry to the poor. With great unselfishness the members of the Church called nothing their own, but brought their possessions to the apostles and deposited them in a common fund on which the apostles could draw to meet the needs of the poor. At this point the growing Church found its first need for organization to meet a new element in its ministry. Burdened with their responsibilities and duties in connection with the ministry of teaching, worship, and the sacraments, the apostles found that they could not administer the poor funds with efficiency. Yet the poor must be cared for, and the apostles must not turn aside from the primary work of their spiritual ministry. The solution of the difficulty was found in organization. Provision was made in the Church for a new office. Deacons were appointed to have oversight of the material interests of the Church, under the direction of the apostles. In the Christian Church everything must be done decently and in order, and organization must be planned to this end. In the appointment of deacons, whose work it was to administer the poor fund of the Church, we find in operation the principle that the Church is to organize itself for the efficient performance of its ministry.

Elders. In view of the fact that the apostleship was not permanent, because the apostles must be men who had been with Jesus and witnessed his resurrection, the time was coming when the Church must be under the direction of leaders who had received the gospel from others and who believed in the resurrection of Jesus on the testimony of others.

After the apostles there must be in the Church officers who would have the oversight of the teaching, worship, and sacramental ministry of the Church. Provision was made for this in the appointment of elders. The eldership in the New Testament Church will be considered in Chapter XIII.

Particular Churches. The Church began its work in Jerusalem with one hundred and twenty disciples under the leadership of the Twelve. On the day of Pentecost three thousand members were added to the Church. Acts 2: 41. Soon the Church had grown to such an extent that there were about five thousand adult male members in the Church, if we are to interpret the Greek word "men" in its strict sense. Five thousand could scarcely be accommodated in any building which was available for Christian worship. Smaller groups would have to be formed for instruction in Christian doctrine. As Jews, the believers in Jesus were accustomed to synagogues or separate congregations for worship in Jerusalem. We should naturally expect, therefore, that the believers in Jerusalem would form a number of congregations, meeting in homes or in other convenient places. These congregations would be under the particular oversight of elders, as the synagogues had been. As the Church spread from Jerusalem to other places, following the persecution in Jerusalem, groups of Christians would be formed for instruction and worship. These groups would need to be organized into what have been called particular churches. We know that when Paul and his companions were on

their missionary journeys and won converts, they organized congregations or churches and elders were appointed and put in authority over the churches. Acts 14: 23. If occasion demanded it, deacons also might be appointed.

Summary. The Church is the body of Christ, organized to perform its ministry, and its organization is flexible enough to make it adaptable to changing needs and conditions. The Church began with the simple direction of the apostles, who had been trained by Jesus himself for their ministry as witnesses. The apostles had the direction of the ministry of worship and teaching and the sacraments. As the Church took up its ministry of the temporal needs of its members, deacons were appointed to have the oversight of this special ministry, that the apostles might be free to give themselves to their special and more important ministry of the word and of prayer. Provision was made for the oversight and direction of the Church after the death of the apostles by the election of elders who would, as far as this was possible, carry on their ministry. As the Church grew, separate congregations were organized, under the immediate oversight of elders, but at first under the higher authority of the apostles. Thus we find the Church adapting its organization to its task and to its environment, but always keeping its organization subservient to its ministry.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. What examples can you find in the Gospels of Jesus' use of system and organization?

2. How did the apostles, even before Pentecost, show their recognition of the importance of organization in the Church?

3. Study the passages in the New Testament which refer to the Church as the body of Christ and be prepared to show what principles these passages teach concerning organization in the Church. The passages can be found by consulting a good Bible concordance under "body."

4. Prepare to report to the class concerning the form of organization in the Jewish synagogue and to compare this with the organization in the Apostolic Church. See a good Bible dictionary under "Synagogue," or see "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," by Edersheim, Vol. I, Book III, Chapter X.

5. What does the incident of the election of deacons show concerning the apostles' view of the primary function of the Church?

6. What does the incident of the election of deacons show concerning the attitude of the apostles toward organization in the Church?

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
- According to Matthew
- According to Mark
- According to Luke
- According to John

The Acts

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews

James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER V

THE CONFLICT WITH JUDAISM

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 3:1 to 8:1; 9:1, 2

The Problem of the Chapter. Why could not believers in Jesus continue as a sect within Judaism?

The Church as a Jewish Sect. Jesus was born of a Jewish mother, was brought up in a Jewish home according to the Jewish customs, and was taught in the Jewish synagogue school. The God Jesus revealed was the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. Jesus worshiped in the Jewish Temple, attended and taught in the synagogue, observed the Jewish feasts, and knew and used the books of the Old Testament, which were the sacred Scriptures of the Jews.

The twelve apostles were Jews, brought up according to the Jewish traditions. They also worshiped in the Temple, attended the synagogue, and observed the feasts. Even after the death and resurrection of Jesus they continued to go to the Temple and to observe many of the Jewish customs. At first, therefore, the Church, which was composed of believers in Jesus, was a company within Judaism who believed that the Messiah had come.

These believers were eager to persuade others of their nation and religion to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour. This sect within Judaism

grew from one hundred and twenty believers to three thousand and then to five thousand. Soon it became evident that this sect of believers in Jesus could not continue within the fold of Judaism. Jesus had taught that a new patch of cloth cannot be sewed on an old garment without rending it, Matt. 2: 21, and so Christianity could not be made a part of the fabric of traditional and legalistic Judaism. There were essential differences between Judaism and Christianity which made inevitable the separation of the two. What were these differences? This chapter will attempt to answer this question by an examination of the events which are described in The Acts, in connection with the beginning of the persecution of the Church of Judaism.

The Conflict of the Apostles. Jesus had been crucified on the authority of Pilate, the Roman governor, or procurator, through the pressure of popular demand, which was in turn prompted and guided by the Jewish leaders. After Pentecost the Church was at first not unpopular in Jerusalem. The joy of the disciples, the ministry of the Church to the poor, and the healing miracles of the apostles combined to make the Church popular with the people. They felt toward the Church much as the multitudes had at first felt toward Jesus. But the same influences which had turned popular opinion against Jesus now began to exert themselves against the Church.

When the apostles healed the lame man in the Temple, Acts 3: 1–10, they took advantage of the

opportunity to teach the crowd which assembled. Peter and John made plain that they preached the God of the Jews, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of the Old Testament Scriptures, but they proceeded to teach that Jesus of Nazareth was the Servant promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus was the Christ whose coming had been foretold again and again throughout the Jewish Scriptures by prophet after prophet, and his suffering and death had been an essential part of his work as the Saviour from sin.

It was at this point that the persecution began. "The priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Acts 4: 1, 2.

Two points are to be noted. The first point is that the Sadducees, who were the most powerful sect of the Jews politically, were what we would call materialists. They did not believe in a spirit which would survive death, and so they did not believe in a resurrection of the dead. On this question of the resurrection they had tried to trap Jesus. Mark 12: 18–27. On this question Paul later easily divided the sanhedrin into two bitterly contending factions. Because Peter and John proclaimed the resurrection of the dead, and based their certainty concerning this doctrine upon the fact of Jesus' resurrection, they would instantly array against them the powerful Sadducees who were in control of the Jewish state.

The second point to keep in mind is that the apostles proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ and the Saviour.

But Jesus had been rejected by the Jewish authorities and had been condemned to death and crucified. If Jesus was risen again, and if Jesus was indeed the Christ, then the official heads of the Jewish religion were entirely discredited. Every mention of Jesus, therefore, aroused the antagonism of the Jewish authorities. See Acts 4: 17, 18; 5: 28, 40. The issue was clearly drawn by Peter when he said to the council, both Sadducees and Pharisees: "He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." Acts 4: 11, 12. If the Christian Church was right, the Jewish authorities were wrong. The two could not continue together unless either the Jewish authorities should confess their error or the Church should renounce its faith in Jesus as the risen Christ.

The Popular Issue. Persecution of the Church could not be carried on by the Jewish council without the support of the people, any more than Jesus could have been crucified if the leaders had not won the support of the populace. On many occasions they had feared the people and so had kept hands off Jesus. So now, because of the popularity of the apostles, the authorities were afraid to do more than threaten them. The authorities must carry out their purpose through popular appeal. There must be some reasons therefore why the Jews as a people could be turned against the believers in Jesus. These

reasons were not lacking, for there were fundamental teachings and practices of the Church on which popular antipathy could be based.

The growth of the enmity against Jesus himself during his ministry is traced with special clearness and brevity by Mark. Ch. 2: 1 to 3: 6. The scribes had become indignant because Jesus claimed divine prerogatives, and because he set aside the righteousness of the Pharisees, which was based upon the scrupulous observance of the traditional interpretations of the law, and demanded righteousness of the heart.

There would be the same ground of opposition to the Church on the part of the Jews who did not see that Jesus was the Christ, for the apostles taught as Jesus had taught. The Church worshiped Jesus as Lord. They ascribed to him attributes and prerogatives which were divine. He was the Son of God. Unless the Jews could be led to accept the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, they could think of the teaching and practice of the Church only as blasphemy, as the deification of a man, or as belief in more than one God. To them the Church was guilty of polytheism or idolatry, the sin which had brought upon the Jewish nation all its troubles and of which it had been thoroughly cured by the exile.

The Church also set aside the way of salvation through the observance of the Mosaic law, and preached the gospel of salvation by faith in Christ in whom is to be found remission of sins and eternal life. The Church likewise followed the teaching of Jesus when he said: "The hour cometh, when

neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers." John 4: 21, 23. The Church no longer felt its dependence upon the Temple and its sacrifices.

A Church which taught the deity of Jesus while Judaism declared that this was blasphemy, which held to the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ while Judaism taught salvation by the works of the law, and which put Christ crucified in the place of the Temple and its sacrifices, could not remain within the Jewish fold. Persecution was inevitable. It was only a question of time until the Jewish authorities would be able to convince the multitudes that the believers in Jesus were the enemies of the true religion. The authorities could make the issue: "Shall we accept the teaching of the apostles concerning Jesus, or shall we hold to the religion of our fathers?"

The Martyrdom of Stephen. The open persecution of the Church by Judaism began with the martyrdom of Stephen. He was one of the seven deacons chosen to "serve tables," but he was more than an administrator of the poor funds of the Church. He "was full of grace and power" and "wrought great wonders and signs among the people." Thoroughly versed in the Scriptures and possessing a clear view of the meaning of the Old Testament in the light of the ministry of Jesus, Stephen proclaimed with great power that Jesus was the Christ. The violent

opposition began in certain synagogues of Jerusalem in which worshiped Jews who had come from Gentile countries. The sojourn in Gentile lands seems to have made them the more intensely loyal to the Jewish traditions. They looked upon Stephen as an enemy of Judaism. The opposition now included all classes: the people; the elders, or rulers; and the scribes, or official teachers. Acts 6: 12.

Stephen was seized and brought before the council, or sanhedrin, for a hearing. False witnesses were brought against him, but, although their testimony perverted Stephen's teaching, their charges evidently were based on what Stephen had said. They claimed that Stephen had spoken against the Temple and the law. In this we see reflected the teaching of Jesus himself, who had told the woman of Samaria that God could be worshiped anywhere, had foretold the destruction of the Temple, and had denounced the Pharisees who prided themselves upon their righteousness because they had observed the details of the law of Moses as it was interpreted in their traditions but were not right with God in their hearts.

Stephen's purpose in his defense before the council has been variously interpreted. Some have expressed the opinion that it is a rambling talk suddenly ending in a bitter denunciation of the leaders of Judaism, but it would be well for the student to read the address with the two chief points in the accusation against Stephen in mind, namely, that Stephen had spoken against "this holy place," or the Temple, and against the law, or the customs which Moses had delivered.

As we read the defense in this way, a number of points stand out. The first is that Stephen traced the progressive way in which God had dealt with Israel from the time of Abraham on. God's promise was fulfilled and his purpose worked out a step at a time, each an advance over that which preceded. The plain implication is that the coming, the life, and the teaching of Jesus marked a new step in God's fulfillment of his promise and purpose. We note, too, that Stephen referred to the promised prophet, "like unto Moses," who was to come, and his plain implication, as his hearers would understand, was that this great prophet like unto Moses was Jesus. The witnesses had charged that Stephen had spoken against the Temple, an accusation which had been brought also against Jesus, but Stephen brought out that the Temple came after years of God's dealing with his chosen people, and even when it was built and dedicated Solomon understood that God could not dwell in temples made with hands. Compare I Kings 8: 27 and Acts 7: 47–50. The true religion had begun without the Temple and it could survive the destruction of the Temple. Observe, also, the charge of Stephen, which runs through the whole address, that the Children of Israel had ever rejected the prophets of God. Moses they had refused. In the wilderness they turned from him and asked Aaron to make them a calf to worship. The prophets they had put to death. What they had done to Jesus was altogether in harmony with what the nation had done to the messengers of God all through its history. But Moses proved to be Israel's deliverer and law-

giver, and so would Christ prove to be their Messiah. They had always been rebellious against God, and now, in rejecting the teaching of the Church, they were doing as their fathers had done before them.

When the members of the council were charged with the murder of the Messiah, rage destroyed the last remnant of their self-control. In a fury they rushed upon Stephen, dragged him out of the city, and stoned him to death.

The Persecution by Saul. The smoldering embers of persecution now burst into flames. The soul of young Saul of Tarsus, a devoted son of Judaism, student of Gamaliel, and proud Pharisee, was set on fire. With all the fury of his fanatic zeal he gave himself to the task of rooting out from Judaism believers in Jesus. There would be no rest for the Church of Christ within the fold of Judaism. Even to foreign cities he pursued the disciples of Jesus in his relentless campaign of threats and arrest and imprisonment and even death.

Summary. The New Testament Church began as a group of believers in Jesus within Judaism. Faith in Jesus as Son of God and as the Christ, however, was so contrary to the traditions of the Jews that the Church could not long continue to be a sect within the Jewish fold. The conflict began with the Sadducees because the apostles preached Jesus and the resurrection, but extended to the other leaders of the Jews because the claim that Jesus was the Christ discredited them and made

them the murderers of the Messiah. The faith of the disciples in Jesus as the Son of God and in the doctrine of salvation by faith instead of salvation by the law, and their neglect of the external forms of the established religion for the great essentials of religion of heart and life, gave additional ground for antipathy. Soon the people joined in the opposition. Stephen was stoned to death, and Saul of Tarsus became the leader in the campaign to root out the Church from the field of Judaism. This is the beginning of that great movement, traced in The Acts, by which the Church became primarily the Church of the Gentiles

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Why would the Church at first be a sect within Judaism? What did the Church and Judaism have in common?

2. Why would there be conflict between the Church and Judaism?

3. What led to the conflict between the apostles and the Jewish authorities?

4. About what did the authorities seem to be most concerned when they warned and threatened the apostles after the healing of the lame man? Compare Acts 4: 17, 18; 5: 28, 40.

5. How did the teaching and practices of the Church become a popular issue?

6. What was the immediate effect of Stephen's martyrdom?

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According to Luke
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The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER VI

THE SPREAD OF THE CHURCH

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 8: 1–40; 9: 32 to 11: 18; The Epistle of James

The Problems of the Chapter. What was the result of the dispersion of the believers in Jesus and what had this dispersion to do with the writing of the New Testament?

The Scattered Disciples. On the day in which Stephen suffered martyrdom there "arose . . . a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem," and the disciples "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles." Acts 8: 1. Wherever the believers in Jesus went, they preached Christ. New believers were won and churches began to be organized throughout Judea and Samaria and in more distant provinces.

A discerning reading of the story of the spread of the Church reveals the fact that the Church was not left to the vicissitudes of chance. Jesus had commanded his disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit should come. Acts 1: 4–6. Previously he had told them that the Holy Spirit would be their Guide and Teacher; he would reveal the truth to them and bring to their remembrance the things of Christ. John 14: 26; 16: 12–14. So Jesus, through

his Spirit, was directing the spread of the Church. This direction was sometimes through Christian workers who scarcely understood the full import of the steps they were taking; at other times it was through the conscious and deliberate planning of those who were charged with the oversight of the Church.

The Leading of Circumstances. The persecution of the Church in Jerusalem led the members of the Church to seek homes elsewhere. No doubt many families were led by personal reasons to seek homes in particular localities. Some sought refuge in towns or villages in Judea. Others turned to Samaria. Acts 8: 1. Others went to Lydda and Joppa. Acts 9: 32, 36. Philip finally settled in Cæsarea. Still others went as far as Phœnicia and Cyprus and Antioch. By this process, which looked like an unguided dispersion of the disciples, under the providential direction of God many centers of Christian influence were established.

The Direction of the Apostles. The scattered groups of believers were not without the oversight and direction of the apostles. When Philip met with great success in his evangelistic work in Samaria, the apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria to see that the church there was being properly conducted. Acts 8: 4–25.

We find also that Peter visited the churches of Judea. Acts 9: 32. It was on one of these tours of oversight that he came to Lydda and healed Æneas,

and to Joppa and raised Dorcas. Acts 9: 32–43. We are, therefore, to think of the Church at this time as composed of a great number of scattered congregations which were under the close supervision of the apostles.

Preaching, Example, and Signs. The account of Luke throws light upon the method by which new disciples were won. The great agency was preaching. Everywhere the believers went, they preached Christ. No doubt following the example of Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost and in his address in the Temple, the believers in Jesus would tell the story of Jesus' life and teaching and show how he fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the Messiah. Then they would proclaim the way of salvation through faith in Christ crucified and would invite those who repented of their sins, and wished to declare their faith in Christ, to be baptized and unite with the Church.

The message of the believers in Jesus was made more effective by their example. Their courage in the face of danger, their peace in the midst of trouble and trial, their gladness of heart in spite of persecution and hardship, would lead those to whom they preached to believe that these disciples of Jesus had something which satisfied the human heart. Their unselfishness, shown in loving service, also was a testimony to their Lord. Their coming into a community brought inspiration and hope and help.

The spread of the Church was aided, also, by the miracle-working power of the apostles and certain

leaders chosen by the Spirit of God for this special testimony. Philip's miracles of healing won many converts in Samaria; Peter's healing of Æneas gave the gospel added power in the plain of Sharon; and his raising of Dorcas helped to spread the gospel throughout the city of Joppa. Acts 8: 6, 7; 9: 32–43.

The Guiding of the Spirit. The progress of the Church is not to be explained merely by the scattering of the disciples and the wise direction of the Church by the apostles. Throughout the story of the Apostolic Church, as told by Luke, we see the guiding mind of the Spirit of God. He was planning a campaign, the full import of which even the apostles did not see and understand at the time.

The Church began as a sect of Judaism, but Christianity was destined to become the religion of the world. The persecution of the Church by Judaism was the first step toward making the Church world-wide. In casting out the Church, Judaism was preparing the way for the Church to carry on its world-wide work unhampered by its relation to Judaism. But the process by which the Church was emancipated from the limitations of Judaism was gradual, even in the minds of the apostles.

When the disciples went to new communities, they went there as Jews and they preached to Jews. It was a long time before they thought of preaching to the Gentiles at all, Acts 11: 19. With their Jewish views and habits of thought, the disciples would have to be led out into a broader conception of the Kingdom of God and of the Church. We can

trace the preparation for the Church among the Gentiles, as it was directed by the Holy Spirit.

Philip preached in Samaria, but the way had no doubt been prepared for him by the visit of Jesus himself in Samaria. In the city of Sychar Jesus had won many believers at the time of his conversation with the woman by the well. John 4: 4–42. In spite of the antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans they had much in common, for the Samaritan Scriptures were the Pentateuch of the Jews, and both claimed to worship the one true God and looked for the Messiah, John 4: 25. Yet Philip's encounter with Simon the sorcerer would help to suggest the problem of the Church's dealing with those who did not have the same views and ideals as the disciples who had been brought up in Judaism.

When Philip was sent by the Holy Spirit down to the desert road near Gaza to talk with the Ethiopian, he dealt with one who had been a convert to Judaism, and who had come to worship in the Temple at Jerusalem. The departure of the Ethiopian to his own country as a believer in Jesus and as a member of the Church would help to give the leaders of the Church a wider view of its mission and of the far-reaching application of the gospel.

Under the guidance of the Spirit another step was soon taken. A Roman centurion in Cæsarea, who was a worshiper of the true God, was directed by an angel to send to Joppa for Simon Peter. Probably Philip was in Cæsarea, but this was a case where the authority of an apostle would be needed. Peter by a vision was prepared to answer the call. The descent

of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his friends showed clearly that these Gentiles should receive the rite of baptism and be welcomed into the Church. This was an event of special significance. As the Church thought upon it, its importance began to be recognized. The Church up to this time was composed of those who had conformed to many of the requirements of the Jewish religion, but here a man was welcomed into the Church who was in no sense a Jew, although he worshiped the God of the Jews. Cornelius came directly from the Gentile fold into the Church. But so clear had been the direction of the Holy Spirit in this that the propriety of the course taken could not be denied. See Acts 11: 1–18. The Spirit was leading the Church to see that it was not necessary for Gentiles to become Jews in order to become Christians. The Church was not to be a Jewish sect, although it sprang out of Judaism.

The Church had now grown into a great number of scattered congregations, but these congregations were largely composed of Jewish believers in Jesus who were still in relationship to the synagogue and observed many of the Jewish customs.

A Letter to the Churches. At this point we find our first example of the origin of the books of the New Testament. We have noted that the Church was under the supervision of the apostles whose practice it was to visit the congregations and to supervise and direct their worship and work. The oversight of the churches, however, was not limited to personal visitation. Frequently written com-

munications were sent to them. The very earliest of these which we have is probably The Epistle of James. This epistle is included among the New Testament books called the "General Epistles," because it is not addressed to a particular church.

The Marks of Time. Read through The Epistle of James and see what marks of time you can discover. Observe that it is addressed "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," ch. 1: 1. At first we might think that this means that the letter is addressed to Jews scattered throughout the world, for there were Jewish settlements all over the Roman Empire. Strabo, about 63 B.C. to A.D. 24, says, "Already a Jewish population has entered every city." The Jews occupied five wards of the great commercial city of Alexandria in Africa. They had penetrated to the banks of the Danube and to the remote coasts of Spain. There were seven synagogues in Rome. See Uhlhorn, "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," pp. 83, 84. But this letter is addressed to Jews who believed in Jesus. The fact that the believers in Jesus are addressed as "the twelve tribes" shows that the Church was still a sect of Judaism. There was no distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers. Also we observe that the congregation of believers is called a synagogue, James 2: 2, the word which was commonly used of the Jews' place of worship. The usual New Testament word for "church" is *ekklesia*. Many congregations had been organized with elders. James 5: 14. Thus we find that The Epistle of James was

written to meet needs in the Church during the days when it was spreading among the Jews through the testimony of those who were scattered abroad by the persecution which followed the death of Stephen. The Epistle of James is therefore generally believed to be the oldest book of the New Testament and is dated about A.D. 45.

The Author of the Epistle. This letter to the scattered churches was written by James, but what James? Because the author does not call himself an apostle, and James the apostle died in the persecution of Herod in A.D. 44, it is generally believed that the author was James the brother of our Lord, who became the head of the church in Jerusalem and presided at the councils of the Church there. Compare Acts 12: 1, 2 and 17; 15: 13; 21: 18. It was quite appropriate therefore that he, as the presiding officer of the church in Jerusalem, should send this letter to the churches. No doubt copies were made and circulated and read to the various congregations

Situations with Which the Epistle Deals. It is not the purpose of this chapter to give an outline of the book, or to present a study of its contents, but to draw to the surface the situations with which the epistle deals.

Many members of the churches had been compelled to leave Jerusalem because of persecution. Even in the various cities to which they fled they would still be subject to some measure of persecution. At least they would find it difficult to live up to their moral

and religious standards as disciples of Jesus. So James spoke of the trials and temptations which they were called upon to endure and urged patience and steadfastness. James 1: 2–4, 12–18.

Because the Church was primarily a teaching institution, two problems would be raised concerning the truth. One of these would be the attitude of the members of the Church toward their teachers and what they taught. James urged that they should listen with humble and open minds and become doers of what they heard. Ch. 1: 19–27. On the other hand, because every believer became a witness for Christ, there would be danger that insufficiently instructed members of the Church might take upon themselves the responsibilities of teachers. So James warned against the improper assumption of this office, and urged a very careful control of the power of speech, prompted by right motives and accompanied by conduct in harmony with the truth. Ch. 3.

One of the weaknesses which James had to rebuke was the tendency to cater to the rich and influential. This attitude was so unfitting in disciples of Jesus that James condemned it with the utmost severity. Ch. 2: 1–13.

There was need also of dealing with the relation of faith to life. The Jews were prone to think they were right with God on the basis of their knowledge and acceptance of the truth. Jesus had said that they thought they were saved by searching the Scriptures. John 5: 39. Because the Church proclaimed salvation by faith in Jesus, some seemed to think that faith in Christ was all that was required of them.

James therefore insisted that faith and works were inseparable and that Christian living was the evidence of real Christian faith. Ch. 2: 14–26.

James observed also the need of warning the members of the Church against letting the cares of this world choke the word in their lives. He warned his readers against forgetting God in their business plans, and against putting wealth and material comfort above the needs of the soul and the service of Christ. Worldliness and materialism had been the very sins which led the Jews to crucify Jesus.

Summary. The disciples, scattered from Jerusalem by the persecution which followed Stephen's death, preached Christ in Judea and Samaria and in more distant places, and churches were formed. At first the disciples preached only to Jews, and the churches were groups of Jewish believers in Jesus under the close supervision of the apostles. While still composed largely of believing Jews, the Church was being prepared for its world-wide mission by such experiences as the successful work of Philip in Samaria, the baptism of the Ethiopian proselyte, and especially the baptism of the Gentile Cornelius. To the scattered churches of this early period of New Testament history, James, the brother of our Lord, wrote his epistle, the earliest of the New Testament books.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Locate on the map the various places mentioned in connection with the spread of the Church in Acts 8: 1 to 11: 18.

2. Find in Acts 8: 1 to 11: 18 as many references as you can which show the careful supervision of the apostles over the churches.

3. Trace the steps by which the Holy Spirit was leading the Church into a wider view of its ministry.

4. What did the Samaritans and the Jews have in common? What were their differences? See a dictionary of the Bible under "Samaritans."

5. Why would it be a comparatively simple matter to receive a person like the Ethiopian eunuch into the Church? See a dictionary of the Bible under "Proselyte."

6. Why would the reception of Cornelius into the Church raise a problem concerning the relation of the Church to Judaism?

7. Prepare to show how The Epistle of James fits into the conditions described in Acts 8: 1 to 11: 19. See the introduction to a good commentary on James or a dictionary of the Bible under "James, Epistle of."

8. Make an outline of The Epistle of James.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
- According to Matthew
- According to Mark
- According to Luke
- According to John

The Acts

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews

James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER VII

PREPARATION FOR THE EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH TO THE GENTILES

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 9: 1–30; 11: 19–26; 22: 1–21; 26: 1–23; Gal. 1: 11–19

The Problem of the Chapter. In Chapter VI we traced the spread of the Church through the disciples who were scattered from Jerusalem by persecution. Wherever in the providence of God they went they proclaimed the gospel, and converts were won and churches were established. These churches were under the supervision of the apostles. The disciples were Jews and preached to the Jews, so that when a letter was sent from Jerusalem by James, who was the head of the church there, he could naturally refer to the believers in Jesus as of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

At the same time we noted that the gospel was preached to the Samaritans who were at enmity with the Jews and yet who had much in common with them. Philip baptized the Ethiopian proselyte into the Church. The Apostle Peter also welcomed into the Church Cornelius, of Cæsarea, who was a Gentile.

What preparation was made by the Spirit of God for the progress of the Church among the Gentiles, and how did the Church become primarily a Gentile institution?

Antioch Becomes a Missionary Center. The conversions of the Ethiopian and of Cornelius were significant, but they were special cases. The practice of the disciples had been to speak "the word to none save only to the Jews." Acts 11: 19. But some of the disciples, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, came to the city of Antioch and there they "spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus." V. 20. Many ancient manuscripts of The Acts read "Grecian Jews" instead of "Greeks." The evidence of the manuscripts is pretty evenly divided, but commentators generally are convinced that the Greeks, or heathen people, are meant instead of Greek-speaking Jews, for before this time there were already many Greek-speaking Jews in the Church, Acts 6: 1. If Greeks, or Gentiles, are meant here, then a new thing had happened in the history of the Church, for the gospel was being proclaimed to those who were in no sense adherents of the Jewish faith.

Antioch in Syria was the most important city of Roman Asia, and the third in rank among the cities of the Roman world. It was peculiarly cosmopolitan. The city was mostly Gentile, but a good many Jews lived there. Less distinguished for general culture than Alexandria, it was even more important than Alexandria in a military way and politically. It was situated where the Orontes passes between the ranges of Lebanon and Taurus. Its harbor, Seleucia, brought Antioch in touch with the Mediterranean. The city was conveniently approached by caravans from Mesopotamia and Arabia. "It was almost an Oriental Rome." Antioch was famous for its beauty

and its splendid buildings, and notorious for its profligacy, fraud, and sorcery, and for the effeminacy of its people.

In Antioch "a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." The fidelity of the apostles in exercising oversight of the Church is seen here again, for when word of the work in Antioch came to Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to visit Antioch and to study the situation, lend what help he could, and report to the church in Jerusalem.

The Apostle to the Gentiles. Barnabas found that the work was being well done in Antioch. The conversions gave every evidence of being genuine. After some experience in preaching and teaching in Antioch Barnabas saw the wonderful opportunity which the work there presented. He therefore went to Tarsus to find the one man in the Church who was fitted to make the most of this great opportunity for which the Holy Spirit had been preparing the Church. The man whom the Holy Spirit had been preparing to be the great apostle to the Gentiles was Saul of Tarsus, whom we know better by his Greek name, Paul.

Paul's Early Training. Saul of Tarsus was a Jew who was proud of his Jewish lineage and of his Jewish training. He was of the sect of the Pharisees, and both at home and in the synagogue school he had been taught according to the best traditions of the Jews. He was a student under the famous Gamaliel in Jerusalem. Acts 22: 3; 23: 6; II. Cor.

11: 22; Phil. 3: 4–6. The most Jewish of the leaders of the Church could make no claims beyond those of Paul. He was prepared for leadership in the Church among the Gentiles by the fact that he was also a Roman. How his family had obtained its Roman citizenship we do not know. It may have been by some unusual service to the Roman state or by purchase, but, however this citizenship was obtained, Paul was a Roman citizen by birth. His citizenship was of great value as he carried on his work throughout the Roman world. In a sense Paul was also a Greek, for he spoke the Greek language and was familiar with Greek learning. Tarsus, where he was born, was one of the intellectual centers of the East. In that city was a famous school of learning in which Stoicism was taught. Probably as a boy Paul did not attend any of these schools, but he would not be unfamiliar with Greek culture.

Paul, therefore, would be at home among the Jews, among the Romans, and among the Greeks.

His Personal Equipment. In addition to his heritage and training, Paul was peculiarly fitted by his personal gifts for a place of leadership. He possessed a keen and balanced mind. Capable of abstract thinking, and able to organize a system of thought, he was also practical-minded, and knew how to adapt his teaching to people and to conditions and how to apply the truth to actual situations in the Church and in everyday life. In addition to his fine and versatile mind, he possessed great enthusiasm. His zeal for a cause which he espoused was never

lacking. Whatever he did, he did with concentration and vigor. Paul's experience also fitted him for his place of leadership. Brought up as a Jew, he knew the best that was in Judaism. As an enemy of Christianity he knew the worst that could be said of it even by its enemies. No argument could be brought against the gospel which he had not faced in his own experience, for he believed in Jesus in spite of every force which had drawn him the other way. His own experience provided him with unanswerable arguments and reasons for the Christian faith.

His Conversion. From the ranks of his enemies, Jesus chose Paul to be his apostle to the Gentiles. This is perfectly clear in the New Testament record. Acts 9: 15; 22: 21; 26: 17, 18; Rom. 1: 5, margin; 11: 13; 15: 15, 16; Gal. 1: 15, 16; 2: 7–9; Eph. 3: 1, 2; I Tim. 2: 7; II Tim. 4: 17. To accomplish this purpose, Paul's point of view must be changed completely. He shared all the antagonism of Judaism for the Church. His whole nature revolted against the attitude of the disciples of Jesus toward the law, toward the Temple, toward the way of salvation, and especially toward Jesus.

Two influences stand out in the New Testament record of the conversion of Paul. The first of these is the influence of Stephen. His masterly address enraged Paul as it did the other members of the council, for he gave his consent to Stephen's death and watched the garments of those who stoned him. The scene set Paul's zeal on fire and he became a

violent persecutor of the Church. But evidently the death of Stephen made a deep impression upon Paul which took time to make its influence felt. Luke tells us that when Stephen was before the council "all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Disciples of Jesus were not likely to be there. Through whom else would Luke learn of this, than through Paul who was there? And why did Paul remember Stephen's face so long? Luke tells us the words of the dying Stephen. Who would hear those words save some one very near? No doubt Paul himself told Luke what Stephen had said. The words had burned themselves into his memory. Paul must have asked himself again and again, "Could that face of an angel, that heroic loyalty, that forgiveness in suffering, belong to an enemy of God?"

Whatever Stephen had done by his reasoning and by his example to influence Paul, the one great event which made Paul a believer in Jesus was the appearance to him of Jesus himself. In The Acts we find three accounts of Saul's conversion. The first is the account of Luke, based upon the facts he had gathered no doubt from Paul himself. Acts 9: 1–19. The second account is Paul's own story of his conversion as he tells it to the mob which threatened his life in Jerusalem. Acts 22: 1–21. The third account is given in Paul's defense before King Agrippa. Acts 26: 1–23. Paul refers to his conversion also in Gal. 1: 15, 16; I Cor. 9: 1. The outstanding fact in each of these accounts and references is the appearance of Jesus to Paul. What

Paul needed was to see Jesus. Immediately his views of the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures began to adjust themselves to his new view of the Messiah. He saw his own religious experience in the light of the gospel. After his vision of Jesus, it no longer seemed to be blasphemy to call him Lord, for "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," Col. 2: 9. Jesus became the center of Paul's faith and life. Around Jesus he organized all his thought about the Scriptures and religion and philosophy.

His Early Ministry. After his vision of Jesus, Paul was led into Damascus where he was welcomed as a brother in Christ by Ananias and received the sacrament of baptism which marked his entrance into the Church. Immediately Paul began to preach and teach Christ in the Jewish synagogues. Paul had heard Stephen preach Christ, and he may have used the Scriptures in a similar way, but his teaching was based upon his vision of Jesus as the Son of God. We should notice that Paul "proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God," the very teaching which had formerly enraged him and stirred his persecuting zeal.

The Jews of Damascus, prompted by the same motives and reasons which had formerly led Paul to persecute the disciples of Jesus, plotted to kill Paul, but he made his escape. Luke, guided by his purpose in writing The Acts, next tells of Paul in Jerusalem. He thus passes over a period to which Paul himself refers in Gal. 1: 17. The apostle spent some time in Arabia, probably thinking through the problems

of his Christian faith. Then he returned to Damascus. Three years had now elapsed since his conversion. In Jerusalem he was looked upon with suspicion until Barnabas assured the apostles of his conversion and loyalty to Christ.

The persecutor was now persecuted, so Paul left Jerusalem and went to his boyhood home, Tarsus. Of his ministry there we know nothing, but no doubt he was engaged in Christian work, which would be a preparation for his ministry as the apostle to the Gentiles to which he had been appointed by Christ, and into which he was now about to be providentially led by Barnabas. In Tarsus he would now come in contact with Greek learning, even if he had not done so earlier in his career.

The Work in Antioch. For a year Paul and Barnabas were associated in the leadership of the church in Antioch. Their chief task was teaching and preaching, but, following the practice of the Church, they would see to the organization of the church for its work in the city. One of the outstanding evidences of the success of the work of Paul and Barnabas in Antioch is the impression which was made by the Church upon the city. In the thought of the people, the disciples of Jesus were no longer simply Jews, or a sect of the Jews. The message of the Church was so definite, and the conduct of the members of the Church was so distinctive, that the disciples became known as believers in Jesus. They were distinctively "followers of Christ," and so the people of Antioch began to call them

Christians, the name by which believers in Jesus have become known the world over.

Summary. The Church was prepared for its spread among the Gentiles by the welcome into the Church of Samaritans, the Ethiopian proselyte, and especially the Gentile Cornelius. Antioch, the strategic base for the campaign in Asia and Europe, became a center for the spread of the gospel, by the preaching of the gospel to the Greeks, or Gentiles, and the organization of a strong church there. Into leadership in the church in Antioch Paul, who had been especially chosen, equipped, and trained to be the apostle to the Gentiles, was called. The church in Antioch was now ready to launch upon its missionary campaign among the Gentiles.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. What is the difference between Grecian Jews and Greeks? Why are there two possible readings of Acts 11: 20? Which is the more widely accepted and why? The article on "Antioch" in Davis' "Dictionary of the Bible" is based on the reading "Grecians." See any good commentary on Acts 1: 19, 20.

2. Why would Antioch make a good base for a mission to the Gentiles? See article in Davis' "Dictionary of the Bible" on "Antioch." Also consult a good commentary on The Acts in connection with ch. 11.

3. What kind of man would be needed to lead the Church in its missionary work among the Gentiles?

4. How was Paul fitted by his early training to be the apostle to the Gentiles? See article on "Paul" in a good Bible dictionary; David Smith, "The Life and Letters of St. Paul," chapter on "His Early Years"; Machen's "The Origin of Paul's Religion," Chapter II; Conybeare and Howson's "The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul," Chapter II.

5. What personal characteristics of Paul fitted him for his place of leadership in the Church?

6. How was Paul fitted by his personal experience for his work of leadership in the Church? See article on "Paul" in a Bible dictionary.

7. How would you explain the conversion of Paul? In addition to the material under "His Conversion" above, see "Paul" in Davis' "Dictionary of the Bible"; Farrar's "The Life and Work of St. Paul," Book III, Ch. X; David Smith's "The Life and Letters of St. Paul," chapter on "The Conversion of Saul"; Machen's "The Origin of Paul's Religion," pages 58–68; Conybeare and Howson's "The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul," Chapter III.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
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According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER VIII

THE EARLY PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH AMONG THE GENTILES

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 13: 1 to 14: 28

The Problem of the Chapter. What were the results of the first missionary efforts of the church in Antioch?

Antioch Becomes a Missionary Base. The preparation for the Church's mission among the Gentiles had been completed. Cornelius the Gentile had been received into the Church by Peter, and the apostle had successfully defended his course before the authorities of the Church in Jerusalem. Men of Cyprus and Cyrene had preached the Lord Jesus to the Greeks. A church had been organized in Antioch, and for a whole year Paul and Barnabas had been engaged in establishing and extending the church. Here was a strong church composed of both Jews and Gentiles, in a strategic city which was in touch with the East and the West.

The Holy Spirit had been preparing for the preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles; now Luke tells us that the Holy Spirit called Paul and Barnabas to carry on the work for which he had been preparing and which he had planned, Acts 13: 2. The missionary party consisted of Barnabas and Paul, with John Mark as their attendant. This is the first

instance recorded in the New Testament of a church sending out a mission. The disciples had previously been scattered by persecution, and the apostles had sent out commissions to visit places where churches were being organized; but this is a mission sent out into new territory on a real foreign missionary enterprise. The date and duration of the mission is not indicated, but it is generally put some time "between A.D. 45–50, perhaps 46–48."

The Missionaries on Familiar Ground. The missionaries embarked at Seleucia, the port of Antioch, and sailed to the island of Cyprus, forty-eight miles away. Two facts would tend to make their first missionary endeavors comparatively easy: Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, and so would be on familiar ground and would probably have many friends and acquaintances in the island. Also Jews constituted half of the population of Cyprus, so that the missionaries could preach in the synagogues, following the usual practice of the disciples. In a systematic way the missionaries went from city to city throughout the island, which was one hundred and fifty miles long and in one part fifty miles wide. Acts 13: 5, 6.

As they drew near to the end of their mission in Cyprus, an event took place which would give them courage, for in Paphos, the capital and the residence of the proconsul, the missionaries after a conflict with a Jewish sorcerer won the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, to faith in the gospel, Acts 13: 6–12.

From this time on, the name Saul is dropped and

the Roman name Paul is used in The Acts. Acts 13: 9, 13. This is probably because at this point he began his work among the Gentiles, and so his Roman or Gentile name is used.

The Missionaries Turn to the Gentiles. From Paphos the missionaries sailed to Pamphylia and came to Perga. Evidently they planned to press on into the interior, a journey which would present difficulties and dangers. Perhaps this is the reason why John Mark, their attendant, turned back; but Barnabas and Paul, undaunted by danger or hardship, pressed on, Acts 13: 13, 14. Pisidian Antioch was their first objective. There were many Jews here and also proselytes. The missionaries were welcomed into the synagogue and invited to preach. From the brief account of the sermon we can learn something of Paul's method as he dealt with those who had been taught the Old Testament Scriptures. Read Acts 13: 16–41. Like Stephen, Paul gave a brief summary of Old Testament history with the purpose of showing the plan of God to provide salvation for his people. Then he announced that Jesus was the promised Saviour, who by his life and death and resurrection had fulfilled the Scriptures. Then he taught the great doctrine of salvation from sin through faith in Christ, and urged the people not to reject the grace of God through unbelief.

The preaching of the missionaries created a great stir in Antioch. Not only the Jews and the Gentile proselytes who worshiped in the Jewish synagogue, but also the Gentiles of the city, were eager to listen

to the message of Paul and Barnabas. They crowded the synagogue the next Sabbath. At this point Paul encountered an obstacle which was to hamper him in all his ministry. The Jews were not willing to think of the Gentiles as recipients of the blessings of the gospel without their first conforming to Jewish requirements. The interest of the Gentile populace roused their jealousy. When the Jews opposed Paul and attempted to deny his message, Paul and Barnabas took their stand on the great Christian principle that the gospel was to be preached to the Jews first, but that it was also to be proclaimed freely to the Gentiles. They made the announcement which marked a new step in the missionary enterprise of the church, "We turn to the Gentiles," and quoted from the Scriptures, Isa. 49: 6:

"I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,
That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth."

The Gentiles received the gospel with great rejoicing and many converts were won throughout all the region. But the Jews, with the help of influential women connected with the synagogue and of leading men of the city, succeeded in driving out the missionaries.

From Antioch Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium, sixty miles away, where they reached both Jews and Gentiles with the gospel, but here again the Jews finally succeeded in stirring up such violent opposition, in which the Gentiles and rulers joined, that the missionaries fled to two other cities of Lycaonia. Acts 14: 1–7.

Preaching Christ in a Heathen Country. Lycaonia has been described as "a bare and dreary region, unwatered by streams, though in parts liable to occasional inundations." Strabo mentions one place where water was even sold for money.

A systematic preaching tour was conducted through this district. The cities of Lystra and Derbe are especially mentioned. At Lystra we find the missionaries endeavoring to win to faith in Christ people who were heathen in the full sense of the word. Evidently no synagogue was to be found in Lystra, for The Acts makes no mention of the apostles' following their custom of entering the synagogue. There was a temple of Jupiter before the gates of the city. In heathen Lystra, Paul and Barnabas had to win the attention of the people and try to make known to them the true God and Jesus Christ who is Saviour and Lord. No doubt they resorted to meetings in the streets and in the market place. The healing of a cripple by Paul won the admiration of the excitable people of Lystra. But the miracle also resulted in a serious misunderstanding, for these worshipers of the gods jumped to the conclusion that Paul and Barnabas were Jupiter and Mercury who had come down to earth. The missionaries who had come to lead the people to worship the one true God found themselves about to be made objects of worship. Acts 14: 8–13.

Here we have an illustration of the difference of the method of the apostle in dealing with the Jews who knew the one true God and with the heathen who worshiped many gods. First the missionaries rent

their garments, which would be a sign of consternation and disapproval of the conduct of the crowd which all could understand, even if they were not near enough to hear their words, or if they did not understand the Greek language which the missionaries spoke. Then Paul began his argument. Read Acts 14: 15–17, and follow the efforts of the missionaries to enlighten these heathen worshipers. First they denied all claims to be anything but mere men, but declared that they were messengers of the one true God. This God they tried to make known to these Lystrians who thought of many gods who were magnified mortals. The true God is the Creator of all things. He is the God of all nations, but each nation had followed after its own deities. But it was the one true God who had sent the rains and the harvests and had made provision for all the joys of life.

Evidently the missionaries remained in Lystra long enough to lead many into a knowledge of the true God and of the way of salvation through Christ. For when the Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and stirred up the people, especially against Paul, and he was stoned and dragged from the city, there remained about him a band of disciples, Acts 14: 20. Probably Timothy was one of these believers. Acts 16: 1, 2.

Paul was not dead, but was able to return to the city for the night and the next day went with Barnabas to Derbe, a city only a few hours distant. Here they won many converts and ended for the time their advance into Gentile territory.

The Results of the Mission Among the Gentiles. That this was a truly constructive mission with permanent results is indicated by the fact that Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps, visiting in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. In each place were churches. The missionaries strengthened the believers in their Christian convictions, urged them to hold fast to their faith when the oversight of the missionaries was withdrawn, warned them of the temptations and trials which they must expect to encounter as Christians living in the midst of heathenism, and appointed elders for the churches. Thus they left behind them organized churches.

On their way back they preached in Perga, then embarked at Attalia, and returned to Antioch in Syria, the home church which had sent them out on their mission, possibly some two years before. When they made their report to the church in Antioch, the one fact which stood out in the minds of their hearers was the fact that churches had been established among the Gentiles. The Christian religion was no longer the faith and practice of a sect of the Jews. No longer was it dependent upon the Jews. There were now churches among the Gentiles.

The missionaries resumed their ministry in the church in Antioch and continued their labors there for some time. How long, we do not know, for Luke does not give any indications of time.

Summary. When the Church had been prepared for its extension among the Gentiles, and a church with Gentile sympathies had been organized and

thoroughly established in Antioch, and when Paul had been called and specially fitted to be the apostle to the Gentiles, under the direction of the Holy Spirit the church in Antioch sent Barnabas and Paul, with John Mark as their assistant, upon a mission. The mission through Cyprus prepared for the more difficult task on the mainland. In Paphos the Gentile governor of Cyprus was converted, and then in Antioch on the mainland the attitude of the Jews led to a distinct mission to the Gentiles. Their mission led the missionaries into distinctively Gentile and heathen territory where converts from among the worshipers of heathen gods were won to the one true God and to Jesus Christ as Saviour. Vigorous Gentile churches were established, instructed in Christian doctrine, and organized. The Gentiles now had their place in the Christian Church.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Trace the preparation of the Church for its wider mission among the Gentiles.

2. Why would the missionary work in Cyprus probably be done with comparatively little difficulty?

3. What would be the effect upon the missionaries of the conversion of Sergius Paulus?

4. Make an outline of the sermon of Paul in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch and tell why it was adapted to an audience of Jews and proselytes.

5. Explain the reason for the antipathy of the Jews in Antioch toward the missionaries. To what important result did their opposition lead?

6. Describe the conditions which the missionaries would encounter in a city like Lystra. See a Bible dictionary, articles on "Lystra" and on "Paul." See also the appropriate sections of the books suggested in connection with the questions of Chapter VII.

7. Compare the address of Paul in Lystra with his address in Antioch and show how his address at Lystra was especially adapted to a heathen audience.

8. What was the most outstanding fact which the church of Antioch observed in regard to the mission of Paul and Barnabas?

9. On a map locate the various places visited by Paul and Barnabas and indicate any distinctive step in the growth of the church connected with any city.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
- According to Matthew
- According to Mark
- According to Luke
- According to John

The Acts

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews

James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER IX

THE CONFLICT WITH THE JUDAIZERS

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 15: 1–35; Galatians

The Problem of the Chapter. The gospel had been successfully preached to the Gentiles. This was the outstanding feature of the mission of Barnabas and Paul in the mind of the church in Antioch. Worshipers of heathen gods had turned to the one true God and had accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and had been baptized into the Christian Church. But the same traditions which had led Judaism to persecute the Church now led the Jews within the Church to raise objections to this reception of the Gentiles. Because the Jews had thought of themselves as the covenant people of God, whose religion was the one true religion, and because the Church had begun as a sect of Judaism, the Jews felt that all the members of the Church should enter the Church as they had entered it, through the gate of Judaism. They had conformed to the requirements of the Mosaic law before they became Christians; why should not the Gentiles conform to the same requirements? We are now to consider this question.

The Issue. There were two views in the Church about this problem. There was the view of those

who thought that Gentiles should virtually become Jews in order to become Christians, and there was the view of those who believed that the Gentiles should be received into the Church merely on the basis of their profession of faith in Christ and should not be required to conform to the practices of the Jewish religion. The future of the Church depended largely upon how this difference of opinion should be settled.

How the Issue Was Raised. While Barnabas and Paul were engaged in the work of the church in Antioch, there came down from Jerusalem certain men who insisted that the Gentiles of the church in Antioch must conform to the requirements of the law of Moses. These men were what are called Judaizers; that is, they insisted that Gentiles should virtually become Jews. We can readily understand how they felt in view of their training. Blinded by their devotion to the traditions of Judaism, they had failed to see what the Church had been taught so clearly. They had not caught the idea of universality which was in the teaching of Jesus. See, for example, Matt. 8: 5–13; 12: 15–21; 28: 19. They had missed the significance of the baptism of Cornelius, which had been fully discussed in the Church, Acts 10: 1 to 11: 18. They had not themselves learned the lesson the Holy Spirit had taught those who worked among the Gentiles as had Paul and Barnabas. They therefore insisted that the practice of the church of Antioch in welcoming Gentiles into membership without requiring them to obey the Mosaic law was

wrong, and they began to disturb the faith of the Gentile members of the Church by declaring that they were not Christians at all and that they could not be saved.

This position would undermine the work of Paul and Barnabas. It denied the soundness of their gospel message. If these Judaizers were right, then the missionaries to the Gentiles were all wrong and their gospel of salvation by faith was untrue. The issue could not be evaded. The future of the Church depended upon this question's being settled and settled right. Paul and Barnabas were therefore unyielding. They openly defended their course against these Judaizing critics.

How the Issue Was Settled. To settle this dispute a delegation was sent up to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas were members of this commission. When Paul and Barnabas told of their missionary labors and success, certain of the Pharisees who had joined the Church took the same position as the Judaizers who had been in Antioch. A council of the Church, consisting of apostles and elders, was called together to consider the matter. Acts, ch. 15. This council as a form of church organization will be considered in Chapter XIII. For a time there was heated debate, but the discussion began to take on a more constructive character. Peter told how the Holy Spirit had clearly guided him in opening the doors of the Church to the Gentiles. God had made perfectly plain that there should be no distinction between Jews and Gentiles; there was one gospel of

salvation by faith for both alike. Then Paul and Barnabas told of their experience in missionary work among the Gentiles, and of how God had clearly given his seal of approval to the welcoming of the Gentiles into the Church without their conforming to the requirements of the Mosaic law.

The discussion had now become so convincing that the Judaizers were silenced, and James, who presided at the council, reviewed the discussion and announced the conclusion that the Gentiles should not be required to keep the Mosaic law. Four requirements, however, were laid down. Acts 15: 20. The Gentile converts were to keep from those practices which might indicate that they had not broken away completely from heathenism and its idolatry and immorality, and were to avoid those practices which, while not wrong in themselves, would be especially repulsive to the Jewish Christians with whom they would be associated in the Christian Church.

The decision of the council was put in writing and addressed to the Gentile churches of Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. To make the understanding of the decision more certain, a commission was appointed personally to deliver the message to the churches.

The great question was now settled by the authority of the apostles and elders, in harmony with the clear leading and teaching of the Holy Spirit. The Christian Church was not to be in any sense a part of Judaism. It was to be free from the bondage of the Mosaic law. Its requirements for membership were to be repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as

Saviour, baptism, and a life in harmony with this profession.

The Epistle to the Galatians. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians deals with this question of the Judaizers which was answered by the council at Jerusalem, and the epistle will be appreciated if it is read with the background of this discussion.

Two questions present themselves concerning this epistle: What was the geographical location of the churches to which it was written? What was the date of its composition? The answer to the second question depends upon the answer to the first.

Ramsay has taken the position that the "Galatia" in The Acts and in the Epistle to the Galatians, Gal. 1: 2; 3: 1, refers to the same region and that it is used of the Roman province of Galatia. This is known as the South Galatian theory, and if this conclusion is correct, then the Galatian churches were the churches of Lystra, Iconium, and Derbe, and possibly even Pisidian Antioch, and they were founded by Paul on his First Missionary Journey, considered in Chapter VIII. The epistle, then, was probably written toward the latter part or at the close of his Second Missionary Journey, about A.D. 52 or 53. But if by Galatia is meant the narrower region popularly referred to by that name, the churches of Galatia would be in such places as Pessinus and Ancyra (Conybeare and Howson) and Tavium, and perhaps Juliopolis (Lightfoot), and the epistle was probably written A.D. 55 or 56, while Paul was on his Third Missionary Journey. Whatever the geo-

graphical location of the churches to which the epistle is addressed or the time of its writing, however, it deals with the activity of Judaizers similar to that which we have considered in this chapter.

References to His Readers. That those to whom this epistle was written were former heathen is evident from ch. 4: 8, 9. They had been worshipers of many gods and had not known the one true God. The situation which is described in connection with the visit of Paul and Barnabas to Lystra fairly represents the former condition of the Galatians to whom Paul was writing. Paul had visited the "Galatians" twice and on his first visit they had shown peculiar love and devotion to him in his physical weakness. Ch. 4: 12–16.

The Gospel at Issue. The question which Paul faced in this letter is the very same issue which he faced in Antioch and at the council in Jerusalem. It was the question of the true message of the gospel. Judaizers had come into the Galatian churches and had taught, as they had taught in Antioch, Acts 15: 1, that the members of the Galatian churches should conform to the customs of Moses. Paul declared to the Galatians that the teaching of the Judaizers was not another interpretation of the same gospel which he had preached to them, but was a different gospel altogether. Gal. 1: 6–10. He insisted that they had come under a perverting influence, Gal. 3: 1, and were being led away from the true Christian faith. If the Judaizers were right, Paul's gospel was

wrong. But if Paul's gospel was right, then the Judaizers were really enemies of Christ within the fold of the Church.

Paul's Apostleship and Authority. The Judaizers had denied the apostolic authority of Paul. He was not one of the original Twelve and had received his gospel secondhand, and they tried to persuade the Galatian Christians that they should not listen to him. In his letter, therefore, Paul declared that he was an apostle by God's own appointment, ch. 1: 1, and that he received his gospel through Jesus Christ. He went into detail concerning his relationship to the apostles. Ch. 1: 11 to 2: 12. He had not received his gospel from men. He had been an out-and-out enemy of the Church until his conversion. When he was converted by the personal appearance of Jesus to him, he immediately began to preach the gospel. For some time he was off in Arabia. It was three years after his conversion that he met Peter (Cephas). After that he had gone into Syria and Cilicia and the churches of Judea outside of Jerusalem did not know him personally. Fourteen years after his conversion he had gone again to Jerusalem to attend the council. There he had first talked with the "authorities" and after that was heard by the council. His gospel had been confirmed by the "authorities" and by the council of the Church, and his practice of not requiring the Gentiles to conform to Jewish customs was officially approved.

No one could appeal to the authority of Peter against him, for the fact was that on one occasion

Paul had openly convicted Peter of taking a course contrary to the gospel. In authority Paul had no superior in the Christian Church.

An Old Issue. In connection with his argument for his apostolic authority and for his gospel to the Gentiles, Paul showed that the Judaizers were raising a question which the Church had already settled by the council in Jerusalem. The Judaizers had shown themselves to be "false brethren," who were really enemies of gospel liberty. Titus, the well-known Christian worker, was a proof of the falseness of the claims of the Judaizers, for Titus was a Gentile who had not conformed to the Jewish customs, and this course was approved by the apostles. Ch. 2: 3–5.

The same argument which Paul made against Peter in Antioch, ch. 2: 11–21, still held good. If the Jews turned to Christ for salvation because they could not be saved by conforming to Jewish laws and customs, why did they ask the Gentiles to conform to these laws and customs in order to be saved? If salvation is through faith in Christ, then it is not to be found through "works of the law."

Salvation by Faith. Paul therefore emphasized again the great Christian doctrine of salvation by faith. Ch. 3: 1–14. He appealed to the Galatians' own experience. The message which they had heard was the message of Christ who died to save them. They had received the Spirit of God in connection with their acceptance of the message of salvation by faith in Christ. This was before the Judaizers had

come with their insistence upon conforming to the Jewish law. The Spirit was therefore received by faith in Christ, not by the works of the law. And if they would be the true heirs of Abraham, they must become his heirs by showing the same faith which Abraham showed, and not by conforming to the laws of Moses. Christians are Abraham's heirs, rather than Moses' disciples. The law brings a curse because of man's disobedience; the gospel offers salvation through faith in Christ, who by his death on the cross redeemed us from the curse of the law.

The Covenant. The Judaizers would make much of the Jew's covenant relation to God. But Paul pointed out that the covenant between Abraham and God was made before there was any Mosaic law. Therefore Gentiles could not be required to conform to the laws of Moses in order to share in the covenant between God and Abraham. Gal. 3: 15–29. Furthermore the law is not the way of salvation, for if it were, there would have been no need of a Saviour. In Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile.

Christian Liberty. To lead the Galatians to see what it would mean for them to turn back to the law after knowing the liberty of the gospel, Paul compared those who sought salvation through the Jewish laws to wards who are under a guardian, but those who are redeemed by Christ are sons and heirs of God who have entered into their inheritance. Would the Galatians go back to the bondage of their

heathen religion again? Of course they would not. Then why should they go back to the bondage of Judaism? Was Paul's labor of love among them in vain? Ch. 4: 8–31.

Paul therefore urged the Galatian Christians to hold fast to their liberty in Christ. Ch. 5: 1–12. But the liberty of the gospel does not mean license. In setting aside the ceremonial law of Moses, Christians are not to set aside the moral law of God. Christian faith is to lead to Christian conduct. Ch. 5: 13–24. The spirit of Christ is to prompt and control every relationship of the Christian's life. Ch. 5: 25 to 6: 10.

Paul closed his letter with a last appeal to the Galatians to stand for the Christian liberty which should be so precious to them.

Summary. The Jewish Christians' loyalty to their traditions led many of them to feel that Gentiles ought virtually to become Jews in order to become Christians. The question whether Christians were to be a sect of the Jews or independent of Judaism and its practices had to be settled. The liberty of the Gentiles was confirmed by the council at Jerusalem. Even then, however, zealous Jewish Christians insisted upon the observance of the Mosaic law by Christians and spread their propaganda through the churches. The issue became acute, particularly in the churches of Galatia, and so to the Galatians Paul wrote an epistle denouncing the Judaizers as enemies of the true gospel of Christ and teaching the doctrine of salvation by faith, and Christian liberty.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. What issue was raised within the Church by the successful mission of Paul and Barnabas? Explain the reason for this issue.

2. What is meant by Judaizers?

3. Why was it important for the Church to settle this issue?

4. By what process was the issue settled and what was the solution?

5. To what churches was the Epistle to the Galatians written, and when? What are the two theories? See articles on "Galatia" and "Epistle to the Galatians" in Davis' "Dictionary of the Bible," or some other good Bible dictionary; Ramsay's "St. Paul the Traveller"; Lightfoot on Galatians, Introduction; Conybeare and Howson, "The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul," pp. 212–215, 233–235, 473–475.

6. With what problem does the Epistle to the Galatians deal irrespective of geography or date? See references under Question 5.

7. Show how the Epistle to the Galatians meets the main issues raised by the Judaizers. First read the epistle through for yourself for the answer to the question. Consult any good commentary on Galatians and article on the "Epistle to the Galatians" in Davis' or some other good Bible dictionary.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER X

PROBLEMS OF THE GENTILE CHURCH

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 15: 30 to 18: 5; I and II Thessalonians

The Problems of the Chapter. To discover the difficulties which the Christian missionaries encountered in their mission in Europe and how they dealt with these difficulties, and to discover how the Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians fit into the situation described in The Acts.

Paul and Barnabas Separate. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from Jerusalem with the letter from the church there announcing the decisions which guarded the liberty of Gentile Christians. This letter and the message of Judas and Silas, the commissioners who accompanied Paul and Barnabas, brought comfort and encouragement to the Christians of Antioch.

The church in Antioch seems to have been well supplied with ministers, for besides Paul and Barnabas there were "many others also" who preached the word. The missionary spirit prompted Paul and Barnabas to go where their ministry was more needed. Their first plan was to visit and strengthen the churches which they had established on their First Missionary Journey. Just here we discover in the story of the New Testament Church a situation

which has occurred often in the Church's later history: good men differed. Barnabas wished to take John Mark along; Paul would not have as a companion one who had shown lack of steadfastness, Acts 13: 13. Barnabas was sure that Mark would now prove his loyalty. The argument waxed hot between these two great Christians and, because neither felt justified in yielding what he thought was the right course to take, they agreed to separate. Barnabas set out with John Mark for Cyprus to visit the churches there, and Paul, taking Silas as his companion, went through Syria and Cilicia "confirming the churches."

The Growing Church. The secret of Christianity's progress lies in its ability to establish germinating centers. Each church became self-sustaining and self-propagating. When Paul and Silas were visiting Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, they found a young man who had developed so rapidly in his Christian faith and life that he was fitted to become a minister of Christ. This was Timothy, who probably had been won to Christ when Paul and Barnabas were in Lystra on the First Missionary Journey. Timothy was known to the churches of the whole region as a promising young man.

Paul's Attitude Toward Gentile Liberty. Paul and Silas were delivering to the Gentile churches the decision of the council at Jerusalem that the Gentiles should not be required to conform to the Mosaic law. In Paul's letter to the Galatians he insisted that to go

back to the law was virtually to give up the gospel. And yet Paul circumcised Timothy. How is the circumcision of Timothy to be explained in view of Paul's teaching? Observe that Paul refused to circumcise Titus, who was a Gentile, Gal. 2: 3, but he was willing to circumcise Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess. Paul would not yield an inch to those who insisted that the circumcision of Gentiles was necessary, but, lest he should put a stumblingblock in the way of the Jews or make the ministry of Timothy, a half Jew, difficult, he circumcised Timothy. Paul was willing to be "all things to all men," until principle was involved; then he was unyielding.

The missionaries found the churches everywhere increasing in numbers daily. Acts 16: 5.

The Church Enters Europe. The statesmanship of the Church was the statesmanship of the Holy Spirit. Evidently Paul and Silas, left to their own judgment or wishes, would have crossed over into the province called Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital. But the Holy Spirit had other plans, so the missionaries went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. There is not space here to go into any discussion of the exact geography of Galatia. The student is referred to a Bible dictionary or a commentary on The Acts, or to Ramsay's "The Church in the Roman Empire," or Lightfoot on Galatians. Reference was made to this problem in Chapter IX.

Now the missionaries would have ventured into

Bithynia, the region which lay to the north along the Black Sea, but again the Holy Spirit directed the statesmanship of the Church, and the missionaries were led to Troas, where Paul, in a vision in the night, heard the call of Macedonia, "Come over . . . and help us." Acts 16: 6–10.

Note carefully the pronouns "we" and "us" in v. 10. Note also the "we" in v. 11. Here we have the beginning of the first of the "we" sections of The Acts, indicating that the writer of the book was an eyewitness of what he narrates. Compare Chapter I. Evidently, then, Luke joined the missionary party at Troas. This Christian physician was the faithful attendant of Paul.

Landing at Neapolis, the missionaries made their way to Philippi, the "first city" of Macedonia, meaning either the first city of importance to be reached by the traveler or the most important city. Philippi was a Roman colony, virtually a Roman city on foreign soil.

Here the missionaries conducted their first work in Europe. There was no Jewish synagogue to provide a preaching place and a congregation, but down by the river Paul and his companions found a place of prayer such as the Jews were accustomed to establish where there were not sufficient worshipers to build a synagogue. The only worshipers of the one true God whom they found were women, one of them a dye merchant from Thyatira named Lydia. Lydia became a convert to the Christian faith and the first Christian church of Philippi met in her house where the missionaries became guests.

The missionaries had become accustomed to opposition stirred up by the Jews, but now they were to encounter opposition from purely Gentile sources. Some men in Philippi owned a slave girl who was a demoniac, and they made great gain by using her as a fortune teller. When on a number of days the demoniac girl had cried out after the company of Christians on their way to their place of worship, Paul commanded the demon to come out of her. When the girl was restored to her right mind, her masters saw that their business was ruined, and they sought revenge upon the men who had dared to meddle with their affairs. Because Rome had recently issued an edict against the Jews, it was an easy matter to raise a riot in this Roman colony against Paul and Silas on the ground that they were Jews. With little ceremony the two missionaries were beaten and cast into prison and placed in the stocks. But providential events led to the conversion of the jailer and he and his family were baptized into the Church. The Roman officials were greatly concerned when they discovered that they had beaten Roman citizens, and became quite apologetic, but they asked the missionaries to leave the city to prevent further trouble. When Paul and Silas were set at liberty, they returned to the home of Lydia and then departed from the city. They left behind them, however, under the temporary care of Luke and Timothy, a Christian church which became known for its thoughtful affection for the apostle who had brought to its members the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thessalonica. Traveling thirty-three miles along the Egnatian Way, the missionaries passed through Amphipolis, an important military station, and thirty miles farther along they passed Apollonia, a town of little importance. Then they came to Thessalonica, about a hundred miles southwest of Philippi. This city was an important commercial center, and there the missionaries found a synagogue. For three Sabbaths they taught there. They argued from the Scriptures that the Messiah was to suffer and die and to rise again from the dead, and that Jesus fulfilled these Scriptural requirements and so was the Christ. There was a marked division in the attitude of the congregation. A few of the Jews were persuaded and became disciples. A great number of Gentiles who had been won to faith in the true God, some of them women of influence, believed the gospel. When the Gentiles in such large numbers accepted the teaching of the missionaries, the Jewish doubters became furious and gathered a riotous mob and attacked the house in which the missionaries were sheltered. Not finding Paul and Silas, they dragged their host and other of the Christians before the authorities of the city and brought charges against them.

The charges against the missionaries in Thessalonica should be noted with special care. Acts 17: 7. Evidently one of the outstanding points in Paul's teaching had been the Kingdom of God. The promised reign of Christ must have received special emphasis.

Without delay Paul and Silas left Thessalonica

under cover of darkness. There must have been some time, however, between the first interest of the Gentiles in the gospel and the riot stirred up by the Jews which led to the departure of the missionaries, for when Paul and Silas departed from the city they left behind them a strong Gentile church.

Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Paul and Silas went to Berea. Acts 17: 10. Here the missionaries found an attentive and open-minded audience in the synagogue. Many Jews were won to the faith, and not a few Gentiles, both men and women. The favorable work, however, was soon interrupted by Jews who followed the missionaries from Thessalonica. Paul seems to have been the chief occasion for Jewish opposition, so the Christians of Berea sent him on to Athens, while Timothy, who had probably joined Paul at Thessalonica, and Silas remained behind to continue the work.

While Paul waited alone in Athens, his zeal would not let him rest, but in this famous city of learning he taught in the synagogue and even addressed the Athenians in the market place. There he encountered the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers and was taken to the Areopagus, or Mars' Hill, where he endeavored to make known to the Athenians the gospel which he preached, Acts 17: 22–31. The Athenians made light of Paul's teaching of the resurrection, but there were a few converts.

From Athens Paul went to Corinth. The character of this city and the difficulties which the gospel would encounter there will be considered in a later

chapter. It is sufficient for us to notice here that Paul lodged with Aquila and Priscilla, Jewish tent-makers who had fled from Rome on account of persecution, and that Paul supported himself by working at his trade and preaching in the synagogue to both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul Writes to the Church in Thessalonica. Paul had left Timothy and Silas (or Silvanus) in Berea, with directions that they should join him in Athens. For some reason they did not meet him there, but came to him in Corinth. At one time Timothy had been sent back to Thessalonica to visit the church there, because Paul could not do so himself. I Thess. 3: 1, 2, 6. Now Timothy and Silas had reached Corinth, I Thess. 1: 1; II Thess. 1: 1, and Timothy told the apostle about the situation in the Thessalonian church. On the background of the story which has been so briefly sketched in this chapter, read I and II Thessalonians, the earliest of Paul's epistles. With what problems did he have to deal? On what particular points did the Christians of Thessalonica need instruction?

A Gentile Church. The Thessalonian church had been founded by Paul after his persecution in Philippi, I Thess. 2: 1, 2, and this church was especially dear to him, ch. 2: 7–12, 17–20. There are two reasons for believing that the Thessalonian church was a Gentile church. Paul referred to the Thessalonians as converts from heathenism with its many gods and its idol worship, I Thess. 1: 9, and attention has been called to the fact that there is

nowhere in these two epistles to the Thessalonians a formal quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures, an omission which would scarcely have occurred if Paul had been writing to Jewish converts who were familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. The Jews also are spoken to as outside the Church. I Thess. 2: 14–16.

These former servants of many gods and worshipers of idols had proved their Christian faith and love by their patience and labors. Their generosity was an example to other churches. I Thess. 1: 2–8.

Persecution. We discover that Paul was anxious about these Christians because of the hardship and persecution they would have to endure. I Thess. 3: 4, 5. This Paul had expected, and when he was with them he had told them plainly that they must suffer for Christ's sake. The Christians in Jerusalem and Judea had suffered persecution, and the Christians of Thessalonica could not expect to escape a similar experience. I Thess. 2: 13–16. But Paul was comforted by word of the patient endurance of the Christians of Thessalonica. I Thess. 3: 6–8; II Thess. 1: 3–12. In addition to the persecution which the Christians of Thessalonica would have to suffer at the hands of their heathen neighbors because they had forsaken their gods, they would have to endure bitter persecution at the hands of the Jews who were jealous because these Gentiles believed that Jesus was the Christ, and rejoiced in the salvation which the Jews thought belonged to Jews only and came through the Mosaic law.

The Return of Christ. In Thessalonica Paul had spoken a good deal about the Kingdom of God and about Jesus as the King. Acts 17: 7. The return of Jesus to reign as King had become the great hope of the Thessalonians. They looked for his coming immediately. Associated with this expectation were certain practical errors which Paul sought to correct.

Some of the Thessalonians were troubled because they thought that the believers who died before Jesus returned would miss the blessings of the Kingdom. But Paul explained that when Jesus returned, the dead in Christ would be raised up before the living Christians were caught up to meet him. All the consolation of the gospel belonged to those who had died in Christ. I Thess. 4: 13–18.

The Thessalonians were also concerned about the time when Jesus would return. Paul therefore reminded them that when he was with them he had told them that the coming of Christ would take even believers by surprise. I Thess. 5: 1, 2. Compare Acts 1: 6–8; Matt. 24: 44.

Because some in Thessalonica thought that Paul's reference to the coming of Christ indicated that this might take place soon, he wrote in his Second Epistle that certain events must precede the return of Christ. II Thess. 2: 1–12.

The expectation of the immediate return of Christ had led some of the Thessalonian Christians to become impractical. Ordinary daily duties seemed to them unimportant. They gave up their work and became a burden upon their fellow Christians.

Paul had set the Thessalonian Christians an example of self-support, I Thess. 2: 9, and now he insisted that the members of the church must not let their hope of Christ's return make them impractical. They must work to earn their living. I Thess. 4: 11. The man who will not work has no right to eat. II Thess. 3: 7–15.

Heathen Immorality. The Thessalonian Christians would find it no easy task in heathen surroundings to hold fast to Christian standards of morality, but they must "walk worthily of God" who called them into his own Kingdom and glory, I Thess. 2: 12. They must not yield to the temptations of lust and passion, but must practice self-control. I Thess. 4: 1–8. They must have no share in drunken revelings, but must be sober as becomes followers of Christ. I Thess. 5: 6–8. It was not easy for these Gentile Christians to submit to authority, and Paul had to exhort them to esteem and love those who were their ministers in the Church. I Thess. 5: 12–22.

The Christians of Thessalonica would be marked people in Thessalonica. If the members of the church, therefore, did not conduct themselves as Christians ought, the loyal members of the church must separate themselves from these disorderly persons as if they were heathen. But this separation was not to be in anger or pride but in love and in the spirit of brotherliness. II Thess. 3: 6–15.

Summary. Paul and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. They visited

Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, and were joined by Timothy. At Troas, as they planned to enter Europe, Luke became a member of the party. Churches were established at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. After waiting alone in Athens for a time, Paul went on to Corinth where he was soon joined by Silas and Timothy, who had been sent back to visit the church in Thessalonica. From Corinth Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica his two earliest epistles, in which he dealt with problems which had arisen in this Gentile church.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. How do you explain the dispute between Paul and Barnabas? What are the arguments for the position of Paul? of Barnabas? What was Paul's final opinion of Mark? Col. 4: 10; Philemon 24; II Tim. 4: 11.

2. What purpose did the separation of Paul and Barnabas serve? Under what circumstances would this separation have seriously hurt the Church?

3. How do you reconcile Paul's insistence upon Gentile liberty and his circumcision of Timothy? See a commentary on Acts 16: 1–3; and the article on "Timothy" in a good Bible dictionary, or a life of Paul.

4. Prepare a report on the meaning of "Galatia" in The Acts and in the Epistle to the Galatians. See Lightfoot on Galatians, Ramsay's "The Church in the Roman Empire," and the article on "Galatia" in a Bible dictionary.

5. Make a map which can be used for Paul's Second Missionary Journey (see a Bible dictionary or a Bible with maps), trace on this map the journey of Paul as far as it is covered in the lesson, and note on the map the significant events at each place.

6. What is meant by the "we" sections in The Acts, and what is the significance of these?

7. Explain the occasion of the writing of Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians.

8. Compare the story in The Acts and the Epistles to the Thessalonians and show how they fit together.

9. Read through I and II Thessalonians and pick out the chief problems with which these epistles deal.

10. Make brief outlines of I and II Thessalonians. Outlines will be found in a commentary or a Bible dictionary, but the student should prepare his own outline directly from the epistles themselves.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XI

THE GOSPEL TESTED IN A HEATHEN CITY

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 18: 1 to 19: 7; I and II Corinthians

The Problems of the Chapter. To discover the difficulties which the gospel of Christ would have to encounter in a heathen city like Corinth, and to find what light is thrown upon these conflicts by Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians.

A Great Heathen City. After his adventures in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens, Paul came to Corinth. The ancient city of Corinth, with its history of fourteen hundred years, had lain in ruins after its destruction by the Romans in 146 B.C., until Julius Caesar had rebuilt it "eighty-seven years before Paul's visit." The growth of the new city had been so rapid that it soon surpassed its former wealth and magnificence. It boasted a great temple of Venus with a thousand courtesans. The very name of the city was associated with voluptuous living. Aristophanes, the Attic writer of comedies (448–380 B.C.), used the word "Corinthianize" with the significance of profligate indulgence. This was used of the old city, of course, but the new Corinth carried over many of its traditions. To this city, engulfed in the tides of business and caught in

the whirlpool of pleasure and indulgence, Paul came with the gospel of Jesus with its exalted ideals of character and its high standards of conduct. If the gospel could conquer here, there was no place where it could not be victorious.

The Beginning of Missionary Work. Alone Paul came to this great heathen city. What could one man do in Corinth? His approach to his task was commonplace and practical. A tentmaker by trade, he sought employment by means of which he could support himself. He found a Jew, Aquila, and his wife, Priscilla, who had fled from Italy because of the edict of the Emperor Claudius commanding all Jews to leave Rome. Acts 18: 1–3. Luke does not tell us that they had previously been led to believe in Jesus, but if they were not already disciples Paul soon won them to the faith as he toiled with them at their common trade.

It was a simple matter for Paul to find in Corinth a congregation to listen to his teaching, for there was at least one synagogue in this commercial city. The congregation was composed not only of Jews but also of Gentiles who were worshipers of the one God. To this congregation Paul presented the message of Jesus as the Christ. Acts 18: 4. After the arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia, Paul preached with new vigor, and when the Jews rejected the gospel he left the synagogue and began a Gentile mission in Corinth in the house of Titus Justus, a worshiper of the true God, who lived next door to the synagogue. This led to a clear division among

the Jews, for those who believed the gospel joined the Church. Among these was Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue. Acts 18: 5–8.

The Church in Corinth. Paul's ministry in Corinth lasted a year and a half. Acts 18: 11. The work at times must have been utterly disheartening, for God gave him a special vision for his encouragement, in which he assured Paul, "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city."

The Jews did all they could to hamper the work of the church. They brought charges against Paul before the proconsul of Achaia, but the proconsul, Gallio, looked upon the case as one of difference of opinion between sects of the Jews and refused to have anything to do with the charges. The scene ended in a riot in which Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, was beaten.

The difficulties of the work, however, were not limited to persecution by the Jews, for Paul had the laborious task of imparting to the heathen Corinthians the high ideals of the Christian religion, and of developing in them Christian attitudes and habits. To eradicate heathen ideas and substitute Christian ideas for them, to persuade the believers in Jesus to live as Christians ought to live, in the midst of the temptations and allurements and low standards of Corinth, was a gigantic undertaking. If there had not been in the gospel a power of God unto salvation, the task would have been impossible of achievement,

but the gospel offered the grace of God, the power of the living Christ in the heart, and the work of the Holy Spirit within the soul. Compare I Cor. 2: 1–5. Paul saw many in Corinth turn from idol worship and the immorality of heathenism to the worship of the one true God and to holy living. But when, after eighteen months of preaching and teaching, the time came for him to leave Corinth, he knew that only the grace of God could keep these converts true and enable the church to go on in its work of evangelization in that great city.

Paul's Departure. No doubt with great sorrow on the part of both Paul and the Christians of Corinth, the apostle set sail with Priscilla and Aquila for Ephesus, where he stayed for a short time only, promising, however, to return later if he found this possible. Leaving Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus, Paul sailed to Cæsarea, and from there he went to Jerusalem and then to Antioch, thus bringing to its close his Second Missionary Journey.

Paul Begins His Third Missionary Journey. After a stay of some time in Antioch, Paul visited again the churches of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening the faith of the believers. At this point Luke introduces us to Apollos, a Jew of Alexandria, a student of the Old Testament Scriptures, a scholar and an orator, who was instructed in gospel doctrine by Priscilla and Aquila. When Paul reached Ephesus he found disciples there, and he began a ministry which extended through three years. This ministry will be considered in the next chapter.

Word from Corinth. At Ephesus word came to Paul from the church in Corinth, and the news was disquieting. It is thought that he then wrote a letter to the church in Corinth, which has been lost, I Cor. 5: 9, and that, when the trouble seemed even more serious than he had thought, he wrote another letter, I Corinthians. Many think that after writing this epistle he made a hurried trip to Corinth. See II Cor. 12: 14; 13: 1. Before leaving Ephesus at the close of his ministry there, he sent Titus to Corinth, expecting Titus to meet him at Troas. (For New Testament references to Titus see Gal. 2: 3; Titus 1: 4; II Cor. 2: 13; 7: 6, 13; 8: 6, 16; 12: 18.) When Titus failed to meet Paul there, the apostle in great anxiety went on into Macedonia, where Titus joined him with encouraging word from Corinth. II Cor. 2: 12–14; 7: 6–16. Then Paul wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. From Macedonia he went to Corinth and spent the winter with the church there, personally completing the discipline and organization of the church.

Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. Read through I Corinthians and see what you can discover for yourself concerning Paul and concerning the Corinthian church.

A number of facts concerning Paul as the writer of this epistle are readily discovered. Paul had received word from Corinth through members of the household of Chloe, a Christian woman, probably of Corinth. Ch. 1: 11. Paul had laid the foundation of the church in Corinth. Ch. 3: 10. He was

planning to come to Corinth. Ch. 4: 19. He had written a previous epistle. Ch. 5: 9. He had supported himself while a missionary in Corinth. Ch. 9: 12, 18. He was now at Ephesus where he planned to remain until Pentecost, but he was planning then to go to Macedonia and after that to spend the winter in Corinth. Ch. 16: 5–9. Stephanas, an early convert in Greece, and Fortunatus and Achaicus had reached Paul with their help for the apostle. Ch. 16: 15, 17. This much concerning Paul is evident from the letter.

Now what can we discover concerning the Corinthian church? We find that there were factions in the church. There was a Paul faction, an Apollos faction, and a Cephas, or Peter, faction, and one faction that called itself the Christ followers. This condition Paul rebuked with the utmost severity, insisting that he and other workers were not leaders of parties but the messengers of Christ and fellow workers with Christ in building up the Church. Ch. 1: 10–17; 3: 1–15, 21–23.

We find that the work of Paul had been disparaged in Corinth because he did not have the presence and the rhetorical speech of certain other professed Christian teachers who came to Corinth after Paul's departure. Paul frankly acknowledged that he had been with them in weakness and fear and much trembling. Ch. 2: 3. His preaching had not the eloquence of the rhetorician. V. 4. But he proclaimed the true gospel of Christ with a power of the Spirit of God. Vs. 4, 5. While he had not attempted to win the people to Christ by worldly

wisdom, he had not lacked God's wisdom; any lack had been on the part of the Corinthians themselves who had not been ready for strong spiritual food. Ch. 2: 6 to 3: 2, 18–20. After all, the church in Corinth was not made up of the worldly-wise and influential; rather God had shown his wisdom and his power by using commonplace people to establish his Church in Corinth. Ch. 1: 26–31.

One of the most serious difficulties in the Corinthian church was the failure of some of its members to break away completely from heathen immorality. Formerly accustomed to impurity even in connection with their heathen religious rites, they failed to realize the absolute necessity of living pure lives as Christians. The conduct of members of the church had brought shame upon the church. Such a condition must be remedied at once. Ch. 5: 1–13. Related to this problem was the problem of Christian marriage. The high standards of the Church concerning the sanctity of marriage raised questions. What should be the Christian's attitude toward marriage? Should Christians marry at all? What was Christian duty when a man was converted but his wife remained a heathen, or when a wife was converted and her husband remained a heathen? What should a Christian father do about his unmarried daughters? Under what conditions was divorce permissible? All these and other questions must be decided, and concerning these Paul wrote. Ch. 7.

There was another problem in the church in Corinth. The Corinthians had left the worship of heathen gods and idols to serve the one true God, but

because they lived in a heathen city, surrounded by idolatry, it was difficult to keep from all the entanglements of idolatry. Could a Christian, for example, purchase meat in the market and eat it without sharing in idolatry, if that meat had been related in any way to idolatrous sacrifices? Paul's reply is interesting. Because Christians do not believe that the gods of the heathen are realities, or that idols are anything more than images, they need not be concerned about whether meat has been offered to idols or not. But if some one, not yet liberated from the idea that the heathen gods are a reality, feels that Christians who eat meat offered to idols are sharing in idolatry, then Paul said that for the weak brother's sake the Christian to whom idols are nothing should not eat, lest he lead his weak brother back to idol worship. There must be no compromise with idolatry, lest the Corinthians fall into the same condemnation as the Israelites in the wilderness. Chs. 8; 10.

Evidently advantage was taken in Corinth of the fact that Paul was so considerate of those with whom he worked, and upon his self-denial was based the argument that he felt that he did not have the same rights as the other apostles. With this question he dealt in ch. 9, in which he insisted upon his right to be supported by the Church, but declared that he chose to maintain himself by his own labors and that he was willing to make any sacrifice to win men to Christ.

A number of matters in connection with the conduct of the services of the church needed to be cor-

rected. One problem was the place of women in the churches. Christianity has exalted womanhood. In Christ there is no male or female. But evidently some of the women in the church in Corinth had let this great truth lead them to disregard certain proprieties involved in the social relations of women in the church, and to assert their rights and independence in a way that caused disturbance. This situation needed to be corrected and controlled. Ch. 11: 2–16.

The Lord's Supper, the precious sacrament of the Christian Church, was being perverted by the Corinthians. The sacrament had deteriorated into a mere feast. To correct this situation Paul made his famous statement concerning the nature and meaning of the sacrament. Ch. 11: 17–34.

In the Apostolic Church there was the gift of tongues. This was not exactly the same as the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost when the apostles' message was understood by visitors from many lands. Rather it was an ecstatic state in which a person uttered words which sometimes neither he nor his hearers understood. This "gift" became a source of disorder and confusion in the Church. Paul explained that the gift of tongues was only one of many gifts, all of which were of the same Spirit, and urged that the gift of tongues was a minor and not a major gift. The gift of tongues should not therefore be a reason for personal pride. There should be no jealousy among the members of the Church. Ch. 12. To teach the supreme importance of love, he wrote the famous thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians, and

then gave practical directions for the proper use of the gift of tongues, and the conduct of the services of the Church, ch. 14.

Evidently the church in Corinth was disturbed about the doctrine of the resurrection, for Paul dealt at length with this important question in the famous fifteenth chapter of this epistle.

Paul concluded his letter with a statement concerning the fund for the church in Jerusalem which was being raised among the Gentile churches, with statements concerning his plans, and with greetings from his fellow workers in Ephesus.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. When Titus reported to Paul in Macedonia that the Corinthians had been obedient to his letter and had disciplined those who had been guilty of immorality, he wrote his Second Epistle, which he addressed to all the Christians in Achaia. II Cor. 1: 1. In this letter Paul unburdened his heart to his Corinthian friends who had now shown their loyalty. He told the Corinthians of his terrible suffering in Ephesus, ch. 1: 8–11, expressed his appreciation of the loyalty of the Corinthians, ch. 1: 12–14, and referred to his expected coming to Corinth, ch. 1: 15 to 2: 4. Paul commended the Corinthians for their loyal discipline of the most serious offender in the church and urged his restoration in the church in view of his repentance. Ch. 2: 5–11. At considerable length Paul discussed his ministry with its trials and its triumphs, ch. 2: 12 to 6: 13, and once more urged a complete break with heathenism and idolatry, ch. 6: 14 to 7: 1. Great

comfort had come to Paul through the message of Titus concerning their repentance. Ch. 7: 2–16. In chapters 8 and 9 he discussed the collection which was being taken for the church in Jerusalem. Then, ch. 10: 1 to 12: 13, he vindicated his claims as an apostle by an appeal to his authority and his self-sacrificing and heroic service. Through this characterization of himself there runs a fine vein of humor, for he imitated those teachers who had won the admiration of the Corinthians by their boasting. Again Paul referred to his plan to visit Corinth and closed his epistle with a greeting and with the apostolic benediction.

Summary. From Athens Paul went to the city of Corinth, notorious for its heathen immorality. In spite of Jewish opposition and heathen environment a strong church was established. After leaving Corinth Paul completed his Second Missionary Journey and set out on his Third Journey. At Ephesus word came to him of divisions, immorality, and doctrinal and practical problems in Corinth. To deal with this situation he wrote I Corinthians. Later, after Titus joined him in Macedonia, he wrote II Corinthians.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Describe the city of Corinth and conditions there in Paul's day. See article on "Corinth" in a Bible dictionary. See also a good commentary.

2. Insert on your map places named in the lesson and indicate any important events which took place there.

3. Prepare to tell vividly and accurately the story of Paul's mission of eighteen months in Corinth. See a commentary on

The Acts, ch. 18: 1–17, a good life of Paul, and articles on "Paul" and "Corinthians" and "Corinth" in a Bible dictionary.

4. Read through I Corinthians and note every reference which gives information concerning Paul's situation at the time he wrote the epistle.

5. Read through I Corinthians and note the different problems which had arisen in the church in Corinth and how Paul dealt with these problems.

6. Find out all you can about Apollos and about Titus. See a Bible dictionary under "Apollos" and "Titus."

7. Make an outline of I Corinthians.

8. What was the occasion of the writing of II Corinthians?

9. What light does II Corinthians throw upon the life of Paul?

10. Make an outline of II Corinthians.

11. Write a comparison of the heathen customs which the gospel encountered in Corinth and the customs which the gospel must encounter to-day in some non-Christian land.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XII

THE GOSPEL'S CONFLICT WITH IDOLATRY AND POLYTHEISM

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts, chs. 19; 20

The Problem of the Chapter. What was the attitude of the Apostolic Church toward idolatry, as illustrated especially in Paul's experience at Ephesus?

Preparation for Paul's Work in Ephesus. Paul had stopped at Ephesus on his Second Missionary Journey on his way back from Corinth. Acts 18: 19. At this time he taught in the synagogue and created considerable interest in the gospel, but he remained only a short time. When Paul departed from Ephesus he left Priscilla and Aquila there. These two Christians were evidently of a retiring disposition, but they were thoroughly instructed in the gospel and in a quiet way would help along the work which had been begun by Paul. At this time Apollos came to Ephesus. He was a student of the Old Testament Scriptures, trained in the school at Alexandria, and was a brilliant speaker, so that he was able with great power to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But Priscilla and Aquila, who had been taught by Paul, readily saw that Apollos did not understand fully the gospel of Christ. His knowledge seemed to be based upon the teaching of John

the Baptist rather than upon the teaching of those who had been with Jesus to the end. When these two quiet disciples explained to Apollos more accurately concerning the gospel, he was quick to see the truth. Before Paul reached Ephesus for the second time Apollos had gone on to Corinth where he did a splendid work in watering the seed which Paul had already planted there. When Paul arrived in Ephesus therefore he found a band of believers who had been taught first by himself, then by Priscilla and Aquila and Apollos. But even then Paul discovered a group of the believers in Ephesus who had not got beyond the baptism of John, which was the baptism of repentance: they did not know of the gift and work of the Holy Spirit. He explained therefore the baptism which was not only a sign of repentance but also a sign of faith in Jesus Christ, and when these believers were baptized they received the Holy Spirit and exhibited the gifts of tongues and of prophecy which were common in the apostolic churches. With the moral support of this band of believers in Ephesus, Paul was ready for his great campaign which lasted for three years. Acts 20: 31.

Conditions in Ephesus. Paul and Barnabas had come in contact with idolatry and polytheism in Lystra, where they were taken for Jupiter and Mercury by the people, and the priest of Jupiter from the temple before the city prepared to offer sacrifices to them. Acts 14: 8–18. In Ephesus Paul would encounter idolatry and polytheism in all their power.

Ephesus was the city of Diana, and the worship of

this goddess dominated not only the city itself but also the surrounding country. The temple of Diana was one of the wonders of the ancient world. "The scale on which the temple was erected was magnificently extensive. It was four hundred and twenty-five feet in length and two hundred and twenty in breadth, and the columns were sixty feet high. The number of columns was one hundred and twenty-seven, each of them a gift of a king; and thirty-six of them were enriched with ornaments and color. . . . The value and fame of the temple were enhanced by its being the treasury in which a large portion of the wealth of western Asia was stored up. It is probable that there was no religious building in the world on which was concentrated a greater ancient admiration, enthusiasm, and superstition." (Conybeare and Howson.) In this temple was the image of Diana, primitive and rude, more Oriental than Greek. This idol was an object of the utmost veneration and was the model on which the images for worship in other cities were formed. When Paul came to Ephesus he came to the city which was the throne of one of the most famous of heathen goddesses.

Models of the image of Diana and of the shrine in which the idol was kept within the temple were made objects of devotion. These were used to bring success to military expeditions, to journeys, or to homes. They were purchased by pilgrims to the city and became idolatrous talismans or charms. Ephesus, therefore, was a center for the spread of this form of idolatry.

Magic also was inseparably connected with the worship of Diana. The "Ephesian Letters" were engraved on the crown, girdle, and feet of the goddess. These letters were written and carried as amulets, and they were pronounced as charms. The study of these magic letters was a science and many books were written by those who practiced this art.

Into this seat of idolatry and of charms and magic Paul came with his message of the one true God and the simple and spiritual worship of the Christian religion. How did Paul meet the issues which were involved in this situation?

How Paul's Work Began. When he began his work, Paul had the moral support of a small band of believers. The synagogue in Ephesus became the scene of his labors, for here he preached the gospel, proving from the Scriptures the claims concerning Jesus as the Christ. Many were persuaded by Paul. As was so often the case, however, a group of Jews not only rejected his message but became his bitter opponents. Not content with rejecting the gospel, they undertook to stir up opposition against Paul in the city. Acts 19: 9. Thus, after three months of teaching in the synagogue, Paul followed the same course which he had taken in Corinth. He and those who believed the gospel withdrew from the synagogue and established their headquarters in the school of Tyrannus, who was probably a Gentile convert to the faith.

Paul's Ministry in Ephesus. Much light is thrown upon the ministry of Paul in Ephesus by his

address to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus as he was returning from his Third Missionary Journey. Acts 20: 17–35. Luke tells us that for two years Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus, which became a center of Christian influence which was felt throughout the whole province among both Jews and Gentiles. If his stay in Ephesus lasted three years, Acts 20: 31, and he spent three months in the synagogue and two years in the school of Tyrannus, we might conjecture that a church was organized in Ephesus, with its own place of meeting, which was the center of Paul's work for the rest of the time. Paul supported himself by working at his trade, but probably at hours which would not prevent his taking advantage of the best time of the day for preaching and teaching. His ministry was not limited to public meetings, but he went from house to house to persuade and confirm believers and to counsel with them concerning the Christian life. Acts 20: 20. Every home which became Christian was a new center of Christian influence. A strong church was established in Ephesus and other congregations were organized in outlying cities and towns, so that Christianity began to make its influence felt in the life of Ephesus and of the province of which it was the capital.

The Gospel and Idolatry. Evidently Paul was careful not to arouse unnecessary antagonism by attacks upon idolatry. In Lystra he had tried to lead the people to a knowledge of the true God as superior to the gods whom they worshiped, thus seeking to eliminate idolatry and polytheism through

the knowledge of something better rather than by denouncing the beliefs of heathenism. In Athens he endeavored without unnecessary denunciation of heathen gods to lead to faith in the one true God. So in Ephesus his heathen opponents had to acknowledge that he had not attacked or desecrated the temple of Diana or blasphemed the goddess. Yet Paul the Hebrew and Paul the Christian could not yield any ground to the idea that there is any god save the one true God. Paul's ministry was positive rather than negative, however. He revealed the true God instead of attacking directly the worship of Diana. But when the Ephesians were won to faith in the one true God, he was clean-cut and positive in his demand for a complete breaking away from all idolatrous worship. In the light of this statement read again what Paul wrote from Ephesus to the church in Corinth, I Cor., ch. 8; 10: 14–33.

Certain things happened in Ephesus which must have made a great appeal to the people. The Ephesians practiced the use of charms and amulets. The Holy Spirit saw fit to give Paul unusual miraculous power in Ephesus, Acts 19: 11, which the people of Ephesus accepted as convincing evidence of Paul's authority as a teacher and of the truth of his message. In this city of magic and charms and incantations, the sons of Sceva, Jews who claimed to have power to cast out evil spirits, tried to use the name of Jesus as a magical formula, but the demoniac attacked them with the cry, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" The event, news of which spread through the city, made a great impression,

and served to bring honor to the name of Jesus and to lead to a renunciation of magic and incantations by many who had been won to faith in Christ. Former practicers of magic brought their books containing their formulas of incantation and burnt them, as a sign of complete renunciation.

Christianity's influence became so great in Ephesus and the surrounding region that there was a distinct falling off in the worship of Diana and in the sales of shrines and images. The disgruntled silversmiths blamed their waning business upon Paul. Acts 19: 23–41. A riot resulted and the mob assembled in the theater where were dragged all the companions of Paul upon whom the mob could lay hands. When Paul, discovering the situation, desired to protect his associates by appearing in the theater, he was persuaded by influential friends not to venture into the crowd. The town clerk, or "recorder," a magistrate of great authority, by his shrewd and politic handling of the situation succeeded in dispersing the crowd.

As soon as things quieted down after the riot, Paul made his departure from Ephesus, but he left a strong church there and in the surrounding country. Thus the gospel met idolatry in its stronghold and proved its power through the positive preaching of faith in one true God who is a Spirit and in Jesus Christ, his Son, as Saviour.

Paul's Further Journey. From Ephesus, as we learned, Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians. After leaving Ephesus he went to Mace-

donia, where he was met by Titus who brought word from Corinth. Then he wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. He went on to Corinth where he spent three months. A plot by the Jews led him to leave Corinth and return by way of Macedonia. Here Luke and others became his fellow travelers. Acts 20: 4–6 (note the "we"). On his journey Paul preached at Troas, held a conference at Miletus with the elders from the church in Ephesus, spent a week at Tyre with disciples, a day with disciples in Ptolemais, some days in Cæsarea in the home of Philip, the deacon and evangelist, and then went on to Jerusalem. Again and again while on his way Paul was warned that danger awaited him at Jerusalem, but with unwavering purpose he pressed on, ready to die if need be in that city to which he felt that duty was calling him.

Summary. On his Third Missionary Journey Paul came to Ephesus, the seat of the worship of Diana. Here Paul demonstrated the power of the gospel to win men from polytheism and idolatry to the worship of the one true God, and proved Christianity's power to permeate a heathen society through the positive and constructive teaching of the religion of Jesus rather than by negative attacks upon the beliefs and practices of polytheism and idolatry. Following his three years' labors in Ephesus, Paul completed his Third Missionary Journey and reached the city of Jerusalem, after being warned again and again by prophets and friends that danger threatened him there.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. On a map trace the movements of Paul in the chapter and, in connection with each place named, indicate any events of special interest.

2. Describe the religious condition of Ephesus before the arrival of Paul. See a commentary on the portion of The Acts dealing with the ministry of Paul in Ephesus, articles in a Bible dictionary on "Ephesus" and "Diana," and lives of Paul.

3. Based upon the account of Luke in The Acts and Paul's address at Miletus to the elders from the church in Ephesus, give an account of the ministry of Paul in Ephesus.

4. On the basis of the account of the riot stirred up by Demetrius prepare a statement concerning the progress of the gospel in Ephesus.

5. Assuming that Paul taught in Ephesus the same principles which he laid down in his First Epistle to the Corinthians written from Ephesus, tell what you believe Paul would have taught the Ephesian converts concerning their relation to the practices of idolatry. Would there be any difference in Paul's attitude toward idolatry in dealing with unconverted idolaters and with converted idolaters?

6. Compare Paul's method of approach to idolaters and polytheists, as this is indicated in the chapter, with the attitude of a modern missionary toward the religious faith and practices of the people in some non-Christian land. For an example see Henry C. Mabie's "Method in Soul Winning," Chapter V, on "Tact in Personal Approach." He refers also to the last chapter in Hume's "Missions from the Modern View."

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel —
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XIII

ORGANIZATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Scripture Material to Be Read: See references in the body of the chapter

The Problem of the Chapter. To discover what the New Testament books themselves reveal concerning organization as it was finally developed in the New Testament Church.

A Group of Two Chapters. This is a good point at which to pause in our study of the story of the Church and of the books of the New Testament as they were written to meet the needs which arose from time to time in the Church, and to consider two important questions which have always been of interest in the Christian Church. These are the questions of government and of doctrine. Can we discover in the New Testament sufficient facts to give us a fairly clear idea of how the Church in the days of the apostles was organized to do its work in the world, and can we find a brief statement of what was included in the message of what we call "the gospel" which the Church proclaimed? The first of these questions will be considered in this chapter; the second will be considered in the following chapter. Then we shall turn again to the story of Paul because

it is related to other books which we should consider in a study of the development of the New Testament.

The Purpose of Organization in the Church. Evidently organization in the Church is secondary, and the Church's task is primary, for Jesus clearly gave the Church its task but there is no record of his saying anything about the form of organization through which the task was to be performed. In Chapter IV we noted that Jesus was an organizer. He organized his disciples to meet situations which he foresaw and he used organization to meet emergencies as they arose. He was systematic and businesslike. The apostles were therefore also systematic and businesslike. When a situation which needed to be handled through organization presented itself in the Church, the apostles were not disconcerted, but proceeded to create organization to meet the need. But always the task was primary and organization secondary. Jesus established a Church with a mission; the Church organized for its mission as the task grew and as the field broadened. The life of the Church kept ahead of its organization; organization was not projected theoretically and then put into operation; it grew as the Church grew. Therefore we should not expect to find a form of organization outlined in the New Testament; rather we find how the living Church, doing its work, growing in numbers, and spreading through wider areas, built up an organization to meet the needs of its growing work. The organization of the Church on the day of Pentecost was not the same as the

organization of the Church at the close of the New Testament. We are therefore to attempt to trace in a general way the development of the Church's organization at the time considered in Chapter IV as it fitted itself for its growing mission.

The Church. At this point we should get clearly in mind what is meant by the word "church" in the New Testament. The word "church" is used by Jesus himself in Matt. 16: 18 and 18: 17, and these are the only instances of its use in the Gospels. But we encounter the word early in The Acts. In the Authorized Version it is found in Acts 2: 47, just after the account of the day of Pentecost, but it appears first in the Revised Version in Acts 5: 11, just after the incident of the deceit of Ananias and Sapphira.

The Greek word translated "church" is *ekklesia*, which means "assembly" and corresponds to the Latin word *congregatio* which has been taken over into English as the word "congregation." It corresponds also to the Greek word *sunagoge*, from which we get our word "synagogue" and which occurs throughout the Greek Old Testament translating the Hebrew words meaning "assembly" and "meeting." The ecclesia or church is, therefore, in the Christian sense, "an assembly of Christians gathered for worship" or "a company of Christians, or of those who, hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, observe their own religious rites, hold their own religious meetings, and manage their own affairs according to regulations prescribed for the

body for order's sake," or "those who anywhere, in city or village, constitute such a company and are united into one body," or "the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth; collectively, all who worship and honor God and Christ in whatever place they may be." (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.)

In the New Testament the word "church" is not used of a building. It means the group of people who meet together in any place for the worship of God, or the local body of believers in Jesus, or it may be used in the sense of all the churches of an area thought of as one body, or it may be used of all believers taken together as the body of Christ. When we speak of organization in the Church we mean organization in a local church or in the wider groups of churches. In this chapter we are to see what the New Testament reveals concerning organization in the Church whether in local congregations or in the Church in the larger sense.

The Apostles. On the day of Pentecost, when the Church began its work after awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit as Jesus had directed, Acts 1: 4, 8, the apostles, as pointed out in Chapter IV, were the authorities in the Church. They were its teachers and its disciplinarians. They admitted new members and dealt with the unfaithful. Decisions rested with them. Responsibility for the whole Church was upon their shoulders.

The apostolic office was not transferable. See Chapter IV.

In its special sense the title "apostle" is applied only to the Twelve and to Paul. The word is used of others, however, in the sense of a person sent on a mission by the Church. It is so used of Barnabas in association with Paul, when they were in Lystra. Acts 14: 14. Epaphroditus is also spoken of as an "apostle" in the Greek in Phil. 2: 25, but the word is translated "messenger."

By its very nature, the apostolate was a temporary office held only by those who were appointed by Jesus himself to be his personal witnesses and under whose supervision the Church was to be launched upon its mission in the world. So even in the early part of The Acts we find the apostles one by one dropping out of the history as they went upon their apostolic missions, and the local church under the direct care of other officers. When Peter was present in the council of the church in Jerusalem, he did not exercise his apostolic authority in dictating the policy of the Church. James, the brother of our Lord, presided at the meeting, and Peter was only one of the witnesses and speakers. The decision was the council's decision under the presidency of James, but a decision in which the "apostles" concurred.

Deacons. In addition to the apostles, the first officers of the Church named in The Acts are deacons. As pointed out in Chapter IV, at the beginning these officers were appointed by the congregation in Jerusalem, at the suggestion of the apostles, to have charge of the relief of the poor of the church in order that the apostles might be relieved of this burden which was

interfering with their giving full time and energy to the primary work of the ministry of the word and prayer. Acts 6: 1–6. The work of the deacons was to "superintend the public messes," or to minister to the poor. In the phrase "serve tables" the word meaning "to serve" is *diakonein*. The noun is *diakonia*. From this comes our word "deacon."

Later in connection with many churches of the New Testament there is no reference to deacons, so the conclusion has been drawn that the diaconate was not an essential office. There were deacons in the church in Philippi, Phil. 1: 1, and deacons are referred to by Paul in his First Epistle to Timothy, ch. 3: 8–13. Some have thought that the office of deacon was not to be identified with the office of those who were called to serve tables in the church in Jerusalem, but Paul, "writing thirty years later, and stating the requirements of the deaconate, lays stress upon those qualifications which would be most important in persons moving about from house to house and intrusted with the distribution of alms." (Lightfoot.) In some countries women were secluded and could not be ministered to by men, so there were women deacons, or deaconesses, for this ministry. Paul said, I Tim. 3: 8, 9, that deacons must be "grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." Persons were not to be hastily called into this office; they were first to be proved and then allowed to serve as deacons, if they were blameless. "Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all

things." V. 11. Deacons were also to be "husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." V. 12.

Elders and Bishops. Very soon in The Acts, we find references to elders. The word is used of the Jewish rulers frequently throughout the Gospels and the first chapters of The Acts, but it is used first of officers of the Christian Church in Acts 11: 30, after the establishment of the church in Antioch, when the offering for "the brethren that dwelt in Judæa" was sent from Antioch "to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul." When Paul and Barnabas revisited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, in returning from their First Missionary Journey, they "appointed for them elders in every church," Acts 14: 23. When Paul and Barnabas had their dispute with the Judaizers in Antioch, it was decided to go up to Jerusalem "unto the apostles and elders," Acts 15: 2, so there were elders in the Jerusalem church. In Jerusalem there was "the church," or assembly, and "the apostles" and "the elders." Acts 15: 4; so also vs. 6, 22, 23. The decrees of the council were reported as the decrees of "the apostles and elders." Acts 16: 4. Toward the end of his Third Missionary Journey, Paul summoned the elders of the church in Ephesus to meet him at Miletus. Acts 20: 17. "James" and "all the elders" are referred to in Acts 21: 18.

Lightfoot has called attention to the fact that when deacons are first introduced into the story of the Christian Church Luke carefully describes the oc-

casion for their appointment, but elders are referred to without any special note. They are taken for granted. This is readily explained. As was pointed out in Chapter VI, the Christian Church began as a Jewish sect. The Jews were accustomed to government by elders, and the Jewish synagogue was under the direction and authority of elders, so that in the Christian group, whether called a synagogue or a church, government by elders would be taken for granted. So in the churches very naturally there were elders chosen to have the direction of the work of the church, and no special attention is called to the fact. The eldership was not something new which required any explanation or comment.

The English word "elder" is a translation of the Greek word *presbuteros*, which has been taken over into the English as the word "presbyter." Elder and presbyter have the same meaning. Presbytery, Greek *presbuterion*, I Tim. 4: 14, is the body of presbyters or elders of the church.

In the New Testament we find also the title of "bishop." Bishop and elder in the New Testament are used interchangeably. Compare Acts 20: 17 and 28. Presbyter or elder, however, came from Hebrew usage. Bishop, or *episcopos*, "overseer," is rather a Gentile word. "To the officers of Gentile churches alone is the term applied, as a synonym for presbyter." (Lightfoot.)

References in the New Testament throw considerable light upon the work of the presbyters, or elders, or bishops, in the New Testament Church. The elders were responsible for the teaching of the Church.

Acts 20: 28, 29. In I Tim. 3: 2, Paul says that an elder must be "apt to teach," and in Titus 1: 9 he says that an elder must be one who holds "to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers." Besides being the instructors of the congregation, the elders were its rulers, responsible for direction and discipline. These two phases of the work of elders are noted in I Tim. 5: 17, where Paul says: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching." Upon this text Calvin based his system of two classes of elders: teaching elders and ruling elders. Others believe that there were not two classes of elders, but that some elders, especially gifted in regard to oversight and discipline, may have made this their chief function, while other elders, especially gifted as teachers, made the teaching task their chief work in the Church.

The qualifications for elders are given by Paul in I Tim. 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 5–9. That the ministry of the church was supported by the church is evident from I Cor. 9: 6–14; Gal. 6: 6; I Tim. 5: 18.

One striking fact should not be overlooked in the study of the ministry of the New Testament Church. There is no mention of a priesthood, except the priesthood of all believers. No bishop, elder, deacon, or other officer is called a priest. All believers come directly to God through Christ, and there is no sacrifice for sin save the sacrifice of Christ, offered once for all.

The Larger Supervision of the Church. Each congregation exercised a large measure of autonomy, but there was provision in the New Testament Church for oversight of the various congregations. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard of the successful work of Philip in Samaria, they sent Peter and John to observe the situation and to give such instruction and assistance and direction as might be necessary. Acts 8: 14–25. For a time at least Peter had the oversight of the churches of a wide area. Acts 9: 32. When a church was formed in Antioch, the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to investigate and to take such action as might be required. Acts 11: 22. When Paul and Barnabas had organized the churches on Paul's First Missionary Journey, they not only revisited the churches to complete their organization, but they also planned later to visit the churches a second time. Acts 15: 36.

The church in Jerusalem was looked upon as the mother church from which the gospel had spread abroad. To this church, with the apostles, the disputed question about the observance of the Mosaic law was referred, and from the council at Jerusalem went forth the decree of "the apostles and elders, with the whole church." Acts 15: 1–29. Thus we find in the New Testament Church the beginning of that larger organization of the Church for the oversight and direction and control of its various congregations which has developed into the episcopal oversight and control by bishops in some Churches, the representative oversight by presbytery in other Churches, or the looser association of congregations

in other denominations. In the New Testament one Christian Church under a bishop, or one Christian Church under a general assembly, or one Christian Church under a council had not developed; but the foundations were laid for the unification in one body of those believers in Jesus who hold to a common faith and purpose and desire to unite for spiritual development and for Christian service.

Summary. There is no record of Jesus' having given the apostles any direction concerning the form of government of the Church. The Church began its ministry under the leadership of the apostles, but local congregations were soon under the immediate direction of elders (or presbyters, or bishops) who were rulers and teachers. They were often assisted in certain temporal ministrations by deacons. The different congregations or groups of congregations were under the direction at first of the apostles or their representatives. Later, councils of apostles, elders, and Church members prepared the way for the unification, direction, and control of the larger Church.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. What is the meaning of the word "church" in the New Testament? See a good Bible dictionary. Look up the word *ekklesia* in a Greek lexicon. Look up every use of the word "church" in the New Testament. Study the definition of "church" in the constitution of your own denomination. Compare the definitions of "church" in a good English dictionary.

2. What was the apostolic office? What in its character made it necessarily temporary? See a Bible dictionary under "Apostle" and the dissertation on "The Ministry of the Church" in Lightfoot's commentary on Philippians.

3. What was the office of deacon in the New Testament Church? Consult a Bible dictionary under "Deacon." By means of a complete concordance find and study every New Testament reference to deacons. See also Lightfoot's dissertation referred to under "2."

4. How would you explain Luke's careful account of the origin of deacons in the New Testament Church and his reference to elders without any explanation?

5. Compare the meaning of the words "presbyter," or "elder," and "bishop" in the New Testament. See a Bible dictionary and Lightfoot's dissertation referred to under "2."

6. What were the duties of elders and bishops, and what were the qualifications for this office in the New Testament? Look up the references to elders and bishops in a concordance of the New Testament; consult a Bible dictionary and Lightfoot's dissertation.

7. What larger oversight of the Church was exercised according to Luke's account in The Acts?

8. What was the place, purpose, and importance of organization in the New Testament Church?

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XIV

THE CHURCH'S TEACHING

Scripture Material to Be Read: The Epistle to the Romans

The Problem of the Chapter. To try to discover the outstanding points in the gospel taught in the New Testament Church.

The Epistles We Have Considered. We have found that the epistles which we have considered in this study were written to readers who already knew the story of Jesus, to meet specific issues or needs. The Epistle of James was written to the scattered believers in Jesus to help them in their peculiar circumstances. I and II Thessalonians were written by Paul to correct certain errors in the Thessalonian church which were reported to him. I and II Corinthians dealt with special problems and difficulties which had arisen in the Corinthian church. None of these books of the New Testament gives a comprehensive and well-rounded presentation of the great message which the New Testament Church proclaimed.

The Epistle to the Romans. When we come to the Epistle to the Romans, however, we find a different kind of book. It was not written to meet some

specific need. It did not deal with issues which had arisen in a church in which the writer was especially interested because he had been its founder or its teacher. The epistle was no doubt written from Corinth during Paul's stay there, mentioned in Acts 20: 2, 3, "for, according to Rom. 15: 25, etc., at the time of writing the apostle was about to go to Jerusalem with the offering for the poor, made by the churches of Macedonia and Achaia. At Corinth he had directed collections to be made; it was the largest city of Achaia; Phœbe, who took the letter, was from Cenchreæ, the seaport of Corinth, ch. 16: 1, 2; Gaius, ch. 16: 23, his host, was probably a Corinthian, I Cor. 1: 14." Paul had wanted to go to Rome, the imperial capital, there to preach the gospel, Rom. 15: 23, but up to this time he had not been able to plan this journey. Now, however, he hoped, after completing his errand to Jerusalem, to realize his expectation, ch. 15: 24, and he wished at this time to send a message to the church in Rome which would prepare the way for his coming.

As we read this Epistle to the Romans we discover therefore that the letter is different from the other epistles which we have considered. It seems more general, more comprehensive, its parts more logically related. Aside from any special or critical issues in the Roman church the apostle was setting forth his gospel. He took advantage of the journey of Phœbe, of Cenchreæ, who evidently was going to Rome on business, to carry this letter to his fellow believers in the Roman capital. His message does not include the story of Jesus which all believers had been taught

at the very beginning of their instruction, but deals with those great gospel truths and principles which grew out of Jesus' person and life and teaching and work.

The Roman Church. The origin of the church in Rome is unknown. It may have been founded by converts who had been won on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2: 10, or believers from Jerusalem or other places may have gone to Rome and, like the scattered disciples at the time of the martyrdom of Stephen, preached the word. Among its members when Paul wrote were Priscilla and Aquila. Rom. 16: 3. At the beginning the church in Rome may have been composed of Jewish believers, but its Jewish constituency was no longer characteristic. The church was now truly Gentile. Rom. 1: 13.

The relation of Peter to the church in Rome does not concern us in this study, for if he was in Rome at all, for which there is traditional support, this was subsequent to the writing of this epistle.

Paul's Gospel. With this brief introduction, let us turn to the Epistle to the Romans and see what we can discover concerning Paul's gospel as a statement of the message of the New Testament Church. In this limited study, it is impossible to go into details, or to attempt even a brief exegetical study. We can try to consider only the outstanding points which constitute Paul's message. What are these outstanding points? To discover these the student should read the epistle for himself, and not depend upon what is set forth here.

Jesus Christ. In Paul's day it was the custom in writing a letter to put the name of the writer at the very beginning. Compare all the epistles of the New Testament, noting that Hebrews is anonymous. Observe that every other epistle begins with the writer's name or identification. Paul, therefore, following the rules of letter-writing at the time, puts his name first. But immediately he follows it with the name of Jesus Christ, which has first place in his message. His message he calls "the gospel of God" and says that the gospel was "promised . . . in the holy scriptures." The gospel is concerning God's "Son," whom he identifies as the human Jesus whose life and teaching, as narrated in the Gospels, were proclaimed by the Church. But he is also the risen Jesus who by his resurrection was "declared to be the Son of God with power." Jesus is the Source of grace and authority in the Church. Also he is associated in the closest possible way with God the Father.

The message of the Church therefore is primarily a message about Jesus, the Jesus whom we know in the Gospels, but whose nature and work are interpreted more fully in the epistles of the New Testament.

Paul's Text or Thesis. After a statement of his personal feeling and his purpose to come to Rome, and his obligation to preach the gospel in Rome, in ch. 1: 16, 17 he gives what to-day would be called his text, or more technically might be called his thesis. His message is "the gospel." The outstanding points in this gospel are its "power," its "salvation," through a "righteousness" which is received by "faith," and

its universality, being efficient for both Jew and Gentile. We might expect these points to be developed in his presentation of the gospel message, and our expectation is not disappointed.

Sin. The gospel had much to say about sin. This is not surprising. The word to Joseph concerning Mary was: "And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." Matt. 1: 21. John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for Jesus proclaimed the message of repentance. The gospel of the Saviour was good news because of the fact of sin, for which the gospel offered a remedy. A glance at a concordance will soon show that the New Testament, as well as the Old, has much to say about sin. Jesus himself said that he "came not to call the righteous, but sinners." His three great parables of the fifteenth chapter of Luke deal with sin, for they are stories of The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Lost Son who said, "I have sinned."

The first point in Paul's gospel, therefore, is man's sin and God's wrath "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Rom. 1: 18. He then proceeds to "shut up" all men "under sin." He describes the heathen who have rejected God the Creator and turned to the worship of the creature and given themselves over to degrading immoral practices. Ch. 1: 21–32. Then he proceeds to show that those who are ready to condemn the heathen share in their guilt. Both Jew and Gentile are guilty before God. The Jew is guilty because he has broken

the law; the Gentile, who does not have the law, is a sinner because he has disobeyed conscience. Ch. 2: 1–16. But lest the Jew might think that he is not a sinner in the sight of God, because of his Jewish privileges, Paul shows how the Jews as a nation have transgressed the law and brought shame upon the name of God among the Gentiles. Rom. 2: 17–29. As a Jew himself Paul says: "Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin." Ch. 3: 9. Again he insists, "For there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." Ch. 3: 22, 23.

Righteousness by Faith. Following his charge that all men are sinners, Paul takes up the next point in his thesis of ch. 1: 17, and discusses "a righteousness of God . . . through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe," ch. 3: 21–30. His teaching is that there is a righteousness which God provides for the sinner, a righteousness which the sinner cannot provide for himself through his own obedience to the law, but a righteousness which is secured from God through faith in Jesus. Sinners are justified, that is, declared righteous in the sight of God the Judge, because they are redeemed by Christ. Sinners are justified freely, that is, without payment on their part. It is of grace; that is, God gives it out of the goodness of his heart in spite of their unworthiness. He says, "We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." This is the element in the gospel message which led to the

conversion of both Augustine, the Latin father, and Luther, the leader of the Reformation.

Paul knew that this doctrine would not be welcomed by the Jews, but Paul declares that in the ancient Jewish Scriptures the great truth that men are justified by faith was taught. "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." Rom. 4: 3; Gen. 15: 6. That the justification of Abraham was not through the works of the law is evident because this was before there was a Mosaic law, and it was before Abraham had conformed to the ancient Hebrew requirement of circumcision. When he was declared righteous in God's sight because of his faith, Abraham was as uncircumcised as the Gentiles. So, declares Paul, we are justified "who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." Ch. 4: 9–25.

Justified by faith in Christ, we have peace with God, and hope. We have the assurance of salvation through faith in Christ who died for us. Paul gives an important place to the cross here. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." We are "justified by his blood." We are "reconciled to God through the death of his Son." Ch. 5: 1–11. Paul carries his argument farther by comparing and contrasting the effect of Adam's sin upon the human race and the results of Christ's perfect obedience in the justification unto eternal life of all who believe in him.

The doctrine of justification by faith is altogether in harmony with the teaching of Jesus. In the

parable of The Lost Son, he taught that the boy who had wasted his substance in riotous living, and was in want and rags and shame, was welcomed by his father, restored to sonship, and given a place at his father's table where a great feast was spread. Jesus himself taught that his blood was "poured out for many unto remission of sins." Matt. 26: 28. It is in harmony with the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2: 38, and with Paul's reply to the jailer in Philippi when he inquired concerning the way of salvation: "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved," Acts 16: 31.

New Life in Christ. Well might those who did not understand Paul's whole gospel raise objections to his doctrine of justification by faith. Justification by faith, according to Paul, is not an abstract, book transaction, unrelated to the life and character of the person who is justified by faith, for faith is an act which brings the believer into vital relation to Christ in whom he believes. Jesus himself had said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." John 5: 40. Saving faith, Paul says, is not the mere belief in a transaction which is for the benefit of the sinner, but is an identification of oneself with Christ. Christ's death on the cross was to enable us to die unto sin, and Christ's resurrection was to enable us to live in newness of life. Rom. 6: 1–11. The person who is justified by faith must give himself to the service of God. He is no longer a servant of sin, but a servant of Christ. Ch. 6: 15 to 7: 6. Salvation by faith includes not only the forgiveness of sin but new

power for victory over sin. "For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Ch. 6: 23.

In this Paul teaches what Jesus himself had taught, for even in his free forgiveness of sin Jesus insisted upon the duty of overcoming sin. After he had healed the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda he said to the man, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee." John 5: 14. Again he said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." Matt. 7: 21. The gospel demands holiness of life.

But man cannot save himself from his sins. This is the chief teaching of the famous seventh chapter of Romans. Paul pictures the man who is trying to overcome the power of sin through his own strength. He knows that he should not do wrong, but he does wrong. He knows that he ought to do right, but he fails to do right. He experiences the terrible struggle between right and wrong in his own nature. The pathetic condition of the sinner is described in the cry: "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" Then he gives the triumphant answer, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and in the eighth chapter he teaches that a new power comes into the life of the believer in Jesus. The Spirit of God works in the believer's heart. Victory over sin is assured.

Thus justification (or being declared righteous) by faith and sanctification (or becoming righteous in life and character) by the Spirit of God are tied

together as inseparable in the gospel proclaimed by the New Testament Church.

The Gospel and the Jews. Three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, chs. 9, 10, and 11, are given to a discussion of the great mystery of the Jews' rejection of Christ and of their place in the plan of God in view of their being the covenant people of God, who will not break his promises. These chapters cannot be discussed in this brief study.

The Practicalness of the Gospel. In the New Testament, truth is always "according to godliness." The teaching of Jesus must be put into practice in everyday living and in all relationships of life. This was an essential element in the message of the New Testament Church. The epistles usually have their "practical" sections in which the application of the gospel to everyday life is considered. Even the content headings in the American Standard Bible, brief as they are, sufficiently suggest this: "Divers exhortations; against self-conceit; to mutual love; to obedience to rulers. Love is the fulfillment of the law. Mutual helpfulness enjoined."

The epistle closes with personal matters and salutations.

Summary. The Epistle to the Romans, written by Paul from Corinth, probably about A.D. 58, gives us a rather comprehensive presentation of the content of the gospel message apart from specific local issues and problems. From this epistle we learn that in preaching the gospel the New Testament Church proclaimed the fact of man's sin and con-

sequently his need of salvation from sin; God's gracious offer to forgive sin and to accept sinners on the ground of their faith in Jesus, crucified and risen, as Saviour and Lord; the actual salvation from sin's power through the indwelling of the Spirit of God, and the necessity of putting the teachings and ideals of Jesus into practice in daily living.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. What was the time, place, and occasion of the writing of Paul's Epistle to the Romans? In addition to this chapter, see a Bible dictionary and a commentary on Romans, especially Sanday's "Romans" in "The International Critical Commentary."

2. Why would the Epistle to the Romans probably be a good book in which to find a comprehensive and balanced statement of Paul's gospel?

3. What was Paul's text or thesis for his epistle?

4. What are the chief points in Paul's gospel as stated in Romans?

5. Compare these points with the teaching of the New Testament elsewhere. Include a comparison with the apostolic teaching outlined in Chapter II.

6. Make an outline of the Epistle to the Romans. After making your own outline, check up with the outline in a Bible dictionary or a good commentary. A complete and detailed outline will be found in Sanday's "Romans."

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
- According to Matthew
- According to Mark
- According to Luke
- According to John

The Acts

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews

James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XV

THE CHURCH'S LEADING MISSIONARY BECOMES ITS GREATEST DOCTRINAL WRITER

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts 21: 17 to 28: 31; Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians

The Problem of the Chapter. What was the effect of the imprisonment of Paul upon the development of the New Testament?

Paul the Missionary Becomes Paul the Prisoner. In Chapter XII Paul reached the city of Jerusalem. In Chapter XIV we noted that in the Epistle to the Romans he told of his desire and plan to go to Rome. The completion of his journey to Jerusalem did, indeed, lead Paul to Rome but in an unexpected, roundabout, and time-consuming way. When Paul arrived in Jerusalem bearing the gifts of the Gentile churches, Acts 21: 17, he was accompanied by Luke (note the "we") and representatives of the Gentile churches. He was heartily welcomed by the brethren of Jerusalem who heard with great gratification of his gospel labors. At the same time leaders in the church in Jerusalem acquainted Paul with a problem. There were thousands of Christians in Jerusalem who had come out of Judaism. These believers had been taught to observe the Mosaic law.

The Church had decided that Gentiles were not compelled to observe the customs of the Jews, but these Jews were not ready themselves to give up these ancient practices. The report had been broadcast that Paul had not only taught Gentile liberty from the Mosaic law, but had also opposed the practice of Jewish customs by the Jews themselves. The elders of the church in Jerusalem thought that if Paul would openly show his personal approval of the observance of Old Testament customs by Jewish believers, this accusation would be proved false. This Paul was willing to do in the interest of his weaker Jewish brethren. Acts 21: 17–26.

While he was taking part in the ceremony which he had undertaken in the Temple, Jews who recognized him as the apostle to the Gentiles gathered a mob and attacked Paul. The Roman guard arrived on the scene just in time to rescue the apostle from the crowd. Paul secured the permission of the Roman centurion to address the Jews who had attacked him and gave the second account of his conversion which is recorded in The Acts. When the mob became infuriated he was led into the castle, and an imprisonment which was to last for at least five years began. Acts 21: 27–36.

In Jerusalem and Cæsarea. Only by his Roman citizenship was Paul saved from being scourged. To find out the exact charges against Paul, the Roman military tribune led Paul before the sanhedrin, or Jewish council. Paul's declaration that he was a Pharisee and believed in the resurrection

divided the council into two factions which became so violent that the Roman officer removed Paul from the council for his safety.

Again Paul was in the Roman prison. That night in a vision he was given encouragement by the promise that he was to bear witness for Christ in Rome. A plot of the Jews to assassinate Paul led the Roman officer to send him under the protection of a heavy guard to Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Palestine. It was to this city that Peter had gone to deal with Cornelius, the Roman centurion. Here Philip the evangelist preached and lived for many years. Here Paul had visited more than once. Now he entered the city as a prisoner. Acts 21: 37 to 23: 35.

Paul's accusers came from Jerusalem to make their charges against him, but Felix, the procurator of Judea, before whom they appeared, put off his decision. He allowed Paul to be visited by his friends, and himself, with his wife Drusilla, often heard Paul, even though the apostle boldly preached to them "righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come." In the hope of receiving a bribe for Paul's release, Felix held him in prison for two years. Acts, ch. 24.

When Festus succeeded Felix, Paul's enemies immediately renewed their charges against him. When Festus suggested handing the case over to the Jewish courts, Paul, certain that he could not receive justice at the hands of his own countrymen, stood upon his rights as a Roman citizen, and appealed to Cæsar. Festus must therefore send Paul to Rome for trial in Cæsar's court. In order to clear the record of the

case which he planned to send to Rome, Festus took advantage of the presence of Herod Agrippa, a neighboring Roman ruler who was expert in Jewish matters, to have Agrippa hear Paul. The apostle's defense before King Agrippa is the third account in The Acts of his life and conversion. Agrippa's opinion was altogether in Paul's favor, and his report would no doubt have helped Paul's defense, but the appeal of the apostle to Cæsar made necessary his being sent to Rome for trial. Acts 24: 27 to 26: 32.

Shipwrecked. The journey to Rome for trial was begun with a number of companions besides Luke, and other prisoners under the charge of Julius, a Roman centurion. They embarked on a coast vessel in which they reached Myra where they boarded another vessel. The difficulty of the voyage led the navigators to cast anchor in Fair Havens, on the island of Crete. In spite of the season and of Paul's warning, the captain of the vessel ventured to try to reach Phœnix, but the ship was caught in a storm and driven to the island of Malta where it was completely wrecked, although all on board reached shore in safety. Acts, ch. 27.

A Prisoner in Rome. After three months on the island, the voyage to Rome was resumed in a ship from Alexandria, which bore them to Puteoli, a port of Italy, from which the journey was made by land to Rome. Paul must have thought of the contrast between his expectation concerning his coming to Rome when he wrote his letter from

Corinth to the Roman church and his coming now as a prisoner. But the Christians of Rome to whom he had sent his letter were not uninterested in him. Two separate companies of Christians came to meet him on the way. When he saw these friends he "thanked God, and took courage." Acts 28: 11–15.

While he was awaiting trial in Rome, Paul was allowed to live in his own hired house, constantly attended, however, by a Roman guard. Here again he showed his eagerness to persuade his own people to accept Jesus as their Messiah, for he sent for the Jewish leaders of the city and tried to explain the gospel to them. There was the usual division among the Jews, for some believed and some disbelieved. Acts 28: 17–28.

At this point the story of The Acts ends with the statement, "He abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him." The rest of Paul's story we must conjecture from Paul's epistles.

For the Progress of the Gospel. For Paul the missionary to become Paul the prisoner seemed to be a great disaster to the cause of Christ. Paul himself, however, wrote to the Philippians during this imprisonment, "The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel." In this chapter we are to observe how Paul's imprisonment led to the writing of some of the books of the New Testament which are great storehouses of

Christian truth. Paul still preached, still directed others in their work in the Church, but especially did he put into writing for preservation through the centuries the Christian messages of three great epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

Paul's Letter to Philemon. In the letters of Paul which we have considered we have discovered many sidelights upon his experience. So now we shall find that a number of his letters help us to understand what he was doing in Rome during the two-year period to which Luke refers at the close of The Acts. One of these letters is the short personal Epistle to Philemon. We must think of Paul as a prisoner, v. 1, in his hired dwelling, advising Church leaders who came to consult him and who carried on their work under his direction. Travelers from distant churches would be sure to visit him. With him were Timothy, v. 1, Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, v. 23. Here no doubt he preached to congregations which gathered to listen to the gospel as it was preached by this apostle in bonds. Among those who came under the influence of Paul was a man by the name of Onesimus. He had run away from his master, Philemon, who was a member of the church in Colossæ. Compare Philemon 2 and Col. 4: 9, 17. He had probably not only run away but also stolen from his master. This runaway thief was won to faith in Christ through the teaching of Paul and became not only an earnest Christian but also an efficient helper of the apostle. Paul would have liked to keep Onesimus as a

helper, but he felt that it was the duty of this converted slave to "make good" with his master, so he sent him back to Philemon. As the converted slave needed to prove his loyalty to Christ by his loyalty to his master, so Philemon, who was a leader in the Christian church, v. 2, needed to prove his loyalty to Christ by showing his Christian love for his servant. Tactfully Paul pleaded for the reception of this former and unprofitable slave as a Christian brother and asked Philemon to charge to him any debt which Philemon held against Onesimus.

The Epistle to the Colossians. Another letter was written at this same time. With Onesimus Paul planned to send Tychicus, Col. 4: 7, 9, to the church in Colossæ of which Philemon was a prominent member. Paul had learned a good deal concerning the church in Colossæ through Epaphras his "fellow-servant," who probably had been the minister of the church in Colossæ, ch. 4: 12, 13. The faith of the Colossian Christians was in danger of being perverted by false teachers. Conybeare and Howson suggest that the most probable view seems to be that some Alexandrian Jew had appeared at Colossæ. He professed a belief in Christianity and was imbued with the Greek "philosophy" of the school of Philo. With this he combined a rabbinical theosophy and angelology, and an extravagant asceticism which also afterward distinguished several sects of the Gnostics. Paul undertook in this epistle to correct these errors by setting forth the doctrines and ethics of Christianity. He speaks of true knowledge and wisdom

and understanding over against so-called knowledge, and teaches the preëminence of Christ and the blessings which are to be found in him. He also warns against ceremonial and ascetic rules of life which are not a real expression of a truly religious life and do not lead to Christian living. He summons his readers to a life which conforms to the example and teaching of Jesus, and gives some very practical exhortations concerning the application of Christian principles to the everyday experiences and relationships of life.

The Epistle to the Ephesians. Another epistle was written from Rome at the same time. This is the Epistle to the Ephesians. Some have thought that the letter was written while Paul was a prisoner in Cæsarea, but this does not fit the facts so well. That the letter was written at the same time as Colossians is evident for a number of reasons. Paul was a prisoner. Eph. 3: 1; 4: 1. This letter, like the Epistle to the Colossians, was carried by Tychicus who accompanied Philemon to Colossæ and delivered the Colossian letter. Ch. 6: 21, 22. This letter does not mention Timothy or other companions referred to in the other two letters just considered, but the epistle is remarkably parallel to the letter to the Colossians. It develops more fully most of the points made in the Epistle to the Colossians, but does not deal with the points concerning special errors which needed to be corrected in Colossæ. "There is scarcely a single topic in the Ephesian Epistle which is not to be found in the

Epistle to the Colossians, but, on the other hand, there is an important section of Colossians, ch. 2: 8–23, which has no parallel in Ephesians. Out of one hundred and fifty-five verses contained in Ephesians, seventy-eight verses contain expressions identical with those in the Epistle to the Colossians. This is just what we might expect to find in the work of a man whose mind was thoroughly imbued with the ideas and expressions of the Epistle to the Colossians when he wrote the other epistle." (Conybeare and Howson.)

The question has been raised as to whether this epistle was written "to the Ephesians." Paul spent three years in Ephesus, but in this epistle there is not a single greeting to any friend or acquaintance in the church to which it is written. In the oldest manuscripts the name "Ephesus" does not occur, and in some manuscripts other names, such as "Laodicea," appear. It is thought that this was a circular letter, sent to a number of churches in Asia, and that duplicates were provided, each of which Paul signed, but the name of the church was left blank to be filled in. Because Ephesus was the capital of the territory the name of Ephesus was readily associated with the letter.

"The Epistle to the Romans, addressed from the East to the West, was Paul's complete statement of the way of salvation. The Epistle to the Ephesians, addressed from the West to the East, was his complete statement of the whole purpose of God in human history. It may be said to mark the climax of his theological instruction." (Purves.)

The Epistle to the Philippians. A fourth epistle was written by Paul as a prisoner in Rome and is evidently to be placed during this same period, but near its close, according to some. This is the Epistle to the Philippians. Lightfoot in his "Philippians" argues strongly for the earlier date. Paul was in bonds, ch. 1: 1, 14, 17; he was under the Prætorian Guard, ch. 1: 13, and had influenced Cæsar's household, ch. 4: 22. With him were Timothy, ch. 1: 1; 2: 19, and Epaphroditus, ch. 2: 25; 4: 18. Paul's trial seems to be at hand, ch. 1: 19–26.

The Philippian Christians had always been solicitous for Paul. Again and again they had sent him help in time of need. Now they had learned of his imprisonment, and they had sent Epaphroditus, probably their minister, to Rome with their gifts for his comfort. Epaphroditus had fallen sick and had almost died, but now he had recovered and was eager to return to the church in Philippi and relieve their minds concerning him. Paul therefore wrote this epistle to thank the Philippians for their love and thoughtful ministry to him. The epistle is peculiarly free from any rebuke, and overflows with appreciation of their gift and of all that it signified.

In these epistles written from Rome are the loftiest teachings of the New Testament, dealing with the Church as the body of Christ and with the deepest experiences of the Christian with Christ.

Summary. Almost immediately after his arrival in Jerusalem, Paul the missionary became Paul the prisoner. From Jerusalem he was taken to Cæsarea,

where he was confined for two years. From Cæsarea he was sent to Rome for trial in the court of Cæsar. His journey was delayed by a shipwreck, but he reached the imperial city, where he was kept under guard in his own hired house for two years awaiting trial. While a prisoner Paul was permitted to preach in his house, and to direct leaders of the Church who came to him. His ministry was now extended through epistles. Four epistles which were written during this imprisonment have been preserved: the Epistles to Philemon, to the Colossians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Trace on a map the movements of Paul from his arrest in Jerusalem to his arrival in Rome, indicating the events of interest at each place. Secure the facts from the record in The Acts.

2. Describe as fully as possible Paul's condition during his Roman imprisonment. In addition to The Acts see the article on "Paul" in a good Bible dictionary; consult a life of Paul or a commentary on one or all of his epistles written during this period.

3. Prepare to tell the story of the Epistle to Philemon.

4. Tell the occasion for the writing of the Epistle to the Colossians and make an outline of its contents.

5. Compare the Epistle to the Colossians and the Epistle to the Ephesians. See accounts of both epistles in a Bible dictionary, a commentary on the epistles, or a life of Paul. See especially the note on the contents of Colossians and Ephesians in Conybeare and Howson.

6. Describe the occasion of the writing of the Epistle to the Philippians and give a description of the epistle.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XVI

FORMING AN INDIGENOUS CHURCH

Scripture Material to Be Read: I Timothy, Titus, and II Timothy

The Problems of the Chapter. What can we learn from the later epistles of Paul concerning his career after the close of The Acts, and what light is thrown by these epistles upon his work of establishing a self-sustaining and self-propagating Church?

An Indigenous Church. An indigenous plant is one which is native to the place where it grows. The task of the missionary enterprise has always been to develop a church which will be native to the place where it is to live and work and expand. The great task of the apostles was to establish churches everywhere which would be able to teach Christian truth in their own communities and reach out to neighboring communities. In this chapter we are to see how Paul in his last years had upon his heart the great work of organizing the churches so that they would be self-sustaining and self-perpetuating.

Paul's Release and Second Imprisonment. When as a prisoner in Rome Paul wrote to his friend Philemon, he expected soon to be released. Philemon 22. When he wrote his letter to the Philippians his trial was evidently approaching, but he expressed

the conviction that he was to be given his liberty. Phil. 1: 25. Luke's narrative in The Acts, however, leaves Paul still a prisoner in his hired dwelling for a period of two years. Acts 28: 30, 31. In his Second Epistle to Timothy Paul again speaks of being in chains, II Tim. 1: 16, and indicates that he is facing what he believes to be certain death, ch. 4: 6. We seem, therefore, to have a different prison situation in Philemon and Philippians and in II Timothy. But we have also the fact that there are references to travels and incidents in the two Epistles to Timothy and in the Epistle to Titus which cannot be fitted into the story of Paul which is told in The Acts. Scholars have come to the conclusion, therefore, that Paul was acquitted and released, that he spent about five years in further ministry in the Church, and that then he was rearrested, condemned to death, and beheaded. The story of this part of Paul's career, constructed from the references in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, is about as follows:

The Story up to Paul's First Epistle to Timothy. It is thought that upon his release Paul carried out his expressed intention to visit Macedonia and Asia. Phil. 2: 24; Philemon 22. He probably went through Macedonia, stopping at Philippi, and to Asia where he no doubt visited Ephesus, Colossæ, Laodicea, and other places readily accessible from Ephesus. In his letter to the church in Rome he had expressed his purpose to go to Spain, Rom. 15: 24, 28, and there is uncontroverted testimony that he went to Spain (Clement of Rome, Muratori's

Canon, and Chrysostom), so it is thought that now he made this journey, probably remaining in Spain about two years, preaching, teaching, and establishing churches. Again he returned to Ephesus. From Ephesus as a base he made journeys to Macedonia and Crete. Immediately upon his return to Ephesus from Crete, he went to Macedonia, leaving the work in Ephesus in charge of Timothy. From Macedonia he wrote to this young minister of Christ a letter which would guide him in his difficult task of correcting the doctrinal errors that had sprung up in the Ephesian church and strengthen him for his task of directing the work of the church.

The First Epistle to Timothy. As we read this epistle we see how Paul is endeavoring through Timothy to establish the church in Ephesus upon a sound foundation of faith and practice, and we can see for ourselves how the letter confirms the story briefly outlined above.

Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus when he departed to go into Macedonia, ch. 1: 3, and the apostle had expected to return to Ephesus soon, but now thought that he might be delayed, ch. 3: 14, 15, and so he wrote to strengthen the hands of Timothy in his difficult task of dealing with the situation in the church in Ephesus.

In his effort to establish a strong, self-sustaining, and self-perpetuating church in Ephesus, Paul in this epistle is concerned about three things. First, he is concerned about doctrine, for the church's life depended upon its loyalty to the truth of the gospel.

He is therefore anxious because men have been teaching "a different doctrine." Ch. 1: 3. This false teaching seems to have been a mixture of Greek philosophy, Persian theosophy, and Jewish traditions, which only led to strife and confusion. The simple gospel is the true doctrine of the Church. Ch. 1: 11. One perversion of the gospel in Ephesus was the substitution of asceticism for true holy living. Ch. 4: 1–5. Because sound doctrine is so essential to the life of the Church, Paul insists upon the importance of pure motives and consistent living and real courage and unselfishness on the part of teachers. Ch. 4: 6–16; 6: 3–16, 20, 21.

Paul is concerned also about the practices of the church. He indicates the necessity of the proper conduct of the services of the church. He calls the church to prayer, and especially urges prayer in behalf of rulers. Ch. 2: 1–4. But he does more than exhort to prayer and to prayer for rulers; he urges that the attitude and manner in prayer in the church be proper. The dress of the women is to be such as becomes the house of God, and the women are not to pray in public or to be teachers in the church. I Tim. 2: 8–12. Some interpret Paul as meaning that women should not hold the office of minister in the church, while others think that Paul was dealing with a special situation in the church in Ephesus which needed to be corrected.

Because the teaching and the practices of the church need to be controlled and directed, Paul is concerned also about government and discipline. This letter was written to guide Timothy in his

oversight of the church in Ephesus. Timothy's work, however, was temporary. Paul therefore is concerned about the ordination of bishops or elders who would be fitted for their office, ch. 3: 1–7, and deacons, both men and women, ch. 3: 8–13. Elders who are in office, as well as the members of the church, must be subject to discipline, so Paul gives direction concerning how discipline should be exercised in the church. Ch. 5: 1–25.

The Story up to Paul's Epistle to Titus. Paul probably came back from Macedonia sooner than he had expected when he wrote to Timothy, I Tim. 3: 14, 15. Then he conducted a missionary campaign in Crete, with Titus as his fellow worker. When Paul returned to Ephesus, he left Titus in the island to complete the work of organizing the Cretan churches so that they might be self-directing, self-sustaining, and self-propagating. As he was about to set out from Ephesus for Nicopolis, he wrote to Titus in Crete. Probably Nicopolis in Epirus is meant, a city four miles from Actium.

Read the Epistle to Titus first for its references to time, place, and historical background. Then read it to discover, as far as you can, the chief matters about which Paul was concerned as he planned for the welfare of the churches in Crete.

The Epistle to Titus. At the close of the Epistle to Titus Paul indicates that he was either at or about to go to Nicopolis, where he expected to spend the winter. With him were Artemas, who is

nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament, and Tychicus, who had been the bearer of Paul's Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. Paul planned to send one of these helpers to Crete, and upon his arrival Titus was to come to Nicopolis to join Paul. Ch. 3: 12. Zenas and Apollos were either on their way to Crete or were on the island, and Titus was expected to aid them on their journey. Ch. 3: 13.

Paul is here concerned about much the same things in regard to the churches in Crete as he had been in regard to the church in Ephesus, except that he deals with them differently in view of local conditions. In writing to Titus, Paul shows that he is concerned about faith, knowledge, and godliness. Ch. 1: 1. He insists that the teaching of the Church must be kept sound and true. Ch. 1: 10–16. But soundness in the faith is not merely an acceptance of the truth of the gospel; soundness in faith is that condition of moral and spiritual health which includes right living. Truth is "according to godliness." So he writes urgently concerning consistent daily living on the part of members of the church. Obedience to God and obedience to state go together. Justification by faith in Christ must be associated with good works. Conduct must "adorn the doctrine" of Christ. Ch. 2: 1–14; 3: 1–9. To the end of maintaining Christian conduct on the part of members of the Church, Paul insists upon discipline. Titus must be fearless in correcting error in faith and conduct. Recalcitrant members of the church must be removed. Ch. 2: 15; 3: 10, 11. Also the

churches must be organized to control their own teaching and direct their own discipline when the temporary oversight of the apostle or his representative is withdrawn. To achieve this end bishops, or elders, equipped by disposition, character, knowledge, and faith, are to be put in charge of the teaching, worship, work, and discipline of the churches. Ch. 1: 5–9.

The Story up to Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy. When Paul departed from Ephesus he passed through Miletus, where he left his companion Trophimus sick. II Tim. 4: 20. Passing through Troas, II Tim. 4: 13, he went on to Corinth where he left Erastus, and traveled on to Nicopolis, which would be a good center from which to spread the gospel in Illyricum. Here probably he was arrested and sent to Rome as a prisoner.

Paul evidently found this imprisonment very different from his former experience, for he is now treated "as a malefactor," or criminal. II Tim. 2: 9. Great courage would be required on the part of anyone who visited him, in view of the attitude toward Christianity now in Rome. His friends in Asia, with the exception of Onesiphorus, had therefore deserted him. II Tim. 1: 15–18. Even Demas, who had been with him in his first imprisonment, Col. 4: 14, had now forsaken him, II Tim. 4: 10. Other faithful workers were on missions at Paul's direction and only Luke, the faithful physician, was with Paul. Probably some of the Roman Christians kept in touch with him. II Tim. 4: 21. In prison Paul

felt the need of his cloak, and wished also for the books and papers which he had left at Troas, II Tim. 4: 13. He asked Timothy to bring these articles to Rome as quickly as possible, and also to bring Mark with him. From his prison in Rome, therefore, he sent, probably to Ephesus, the letter which we know as Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy. Evidently Paul had had one hearing, at which he came out triumphant, ch. 4: 16, 17, but now he believed that he was facing condemnation and execution, ch. 4: 6.

The Second Epistle to Timothy. In this epistle, as in the other two epistles considered in this chapter, Paul, apart from his personal desire for the companionship of Timothy, is concerned about the Church of Christ. He has been hoping and praying and working for a Church which will be self-sustaining and self-propagating. Again in this epistle we see him emphasizing the things which are essential to the life of the Church.

Paul indicates that the hope of the Church lies in its leadership. He therefore appeals to Timothy, as a leader in the Church, to be loyal to the truth, to be true to Christ in his personal life, and to be faithful and earnest in his work. Notice especially, ch. 1: 5–14; 2: 3–13; 4: 5. Paul is also concerned about doctrine in the Church. The future of the Church depends upon each generation's passing the gospel on to the next generation, so he writes, "And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men,

who shall be able to teach others also." Ch. 2: 2. He is concerned, also, about disputes and arguments which are destructive rather than constructive, ch. 2: 14, 23, and about departures from the true gospel of Christ, ch. 4: 1–5. Paul is likewise concerned about the tendency in the Church to turn aside from the ethical teaching of Jesus. Doctrine, he insists, is according to godliness. Sound doctrine and sound living are inseparable. Ch. 3. Paul also lays emphasis upon the importance of discipline. Timothy must not be afraid to withstand false teachers and corrupters of morals in the Church and to teach the truth and call to repentance. Ch. 2: 14, 24–26; 3: 16; 4: 1, 2.

Paul's Martyrdom. The New Testament does not tell the story of Paul's death. We do not know whether Timothy reached Rome in time to comfort his father in the faith. The testimony of tradition leaves no doubt that Paul was condemned to death because he was a Christian, and was beheaded, probably A.D. 67. We may take as his last words the words which he wrote to Timothy: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing."

Summary. At his trial in Rome, Paul was probably acquitted and took up once more his

apostolic labors. He preached and taught and labored in Asia Minor, in Macedonia, and in Greece, and even in Spain, but while engaged in the work, probably at Nicopolis, he was arrested, and taken to Rome. During the period of his travels and imprisonment he wrote the three pastoral epistles, I Timothy, Titus, and II Timothy, to help these assistants in the work of building up self-sustaining, self-perpetuating, and self-propagating churches. Soon after he wrote II Timothy he was executed because of his faith in Jesus as his Saviour and Lord.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. What reason can you give for concluding that Paul was acquitted in Rome, given his liberty, and later arrested again, condemned, and executed? In addition to this chapter, see the article on "Paul" in a Bible dictionary, lives of Paul, and introductions to commentaries on his Pastoral Epistles.

2. Trace on a map the journeys of Paul as outlined in this chapter.

3. What would be necessary in a church to make it self-sustaining, self-perpetuating, and capable of extension into wider fields?

4. Under what circumstances was Paul's First Epistle to Timothy written?

5. With what three essentials for an indigenous church did Paul deal in I Timothy?

6. What led to the writing of The Epistle of Paul to Titus?

7. Name three essentials for an indigenous church with which Paul deals in the Epistle to Titus.

8. What can you learn from II Timothy about Paul at the time he wrote this epistle?

9. What does Paul indicate in II Timothy concerning leadership in the Christian Church?

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XVII

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

Scripture Material to Be Read: The Epistle to the Hebrews

The Problems of the Chapter. The Christian Church developed out of Judaism, and yet was rejected by Judaism. See Chapter V. Repeated efforts were made to carry Judaism over into the Christian Church. See Chapter IX. Although Christianity had its origin in Judaism, Judaism and Christianity became separate and antagonistic. What, then, ought to be the attitude of the Christian Church toward the Old Testament, which was the Scriptures of Judaism, and toward the Old Testament institutions which were the institutions of Judaism? What does the New Testament itself indicate concerning the attitude of the New Testament Church toward the Old Testament?

A Common Heritage. Judaism and Christianity at the beginning had a common heritage. The Old Testament Scriptures were accepted by Jesus and by the apostles as the Word of God. And yet we discover that the Christian Church approached the Gentiles in a way which was different from its approach to the Jews. In Lystra and in Athens Paul did not appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures.

Did the Christian Church use the Old Testament Scriptures only in dealing with the Jews, and set it aside in dealing with the Gentiles? Or did the Christian Church recognize the Old Testament as the sacred Scriptures of Christianity as well as of Judaism? Is the Old Testament a common heritage of Christianity and Judaism, or did Christianity break entirely away from the Old Testament Scriptures?

New Testament Quotations from the Old Testament. The Christian Church did not begin on an absolutely new foundation. It built upon the foundation already laid in the Old Testament. The history of the Jews was a preparation for the history of the Church. There was a true revelation of God in the Old Testament. Jesus himself said, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." Matt. 5: 18. When he said this he was discussing the Law and the Prophets, or the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament. The Scriptures of the Jews permeate the New Testament of the Christian Church. This will be seen very quickly if we examine a New Testament with marginal references and observe how many references there are to the Old Testament. Much in the New Testament would be hard to understand without the Old Testament. In Chapter X the statement was made that in I and II Thessalonians there is not a single formal quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures, which is evidence that the

epistles were addressed to a Gentile church, and yet in Westcott and Hort's Greek New Testament there are seven words, phrases, or clauses in I Thessalonians, and nine in II Thessalonians which are traced to the Old Testament Scriptures. In addition to clear and complete quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament, the thoughts, ideas, words, and phrases of the Old Testament recur in the New Testament like motifs in a musical composition. Westcott and Hort, with the coöperation of Dr. Moulton, noted in their Greek New Testament one thousand and sixty-seven words, phrases, clauses, or sentences which are quotations from the Old Testament, and many of these come from more than one Old Testament passage. In only four books are there no quotations from the Old Testament: Philemon and the three Epistles of John. The Old Testament quotations in the various New Testament books are as follows: Matt., 101; Mark, 56; Luke, 86; John, 21; Acts, 108; Rom. 74; I Cor., 29; II Cor., 20; Gal., 13; Eph., 21; Phil., 6; Col., 4; I Thess., 7; II Thess., 9; Heb., 90; I Tim., 2; II Tim., 4; Titus, 3; James, 18; I Peter, 31; II Peter, 5; Jude, 5; Rev., 354. Evidently the New Testament has drawn much from the Old, and the special Scriptures of the Christian Church are not to be thought of as independent of and apart from the Jewish Scriptures of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament Fulfilled in the New. Jesus said to the Jews concerning their Scriptures: "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in

them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." John 5: 39, 40. So he said in Luke 4: 21, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." The Gospels again and again have words like these: "Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." Luke 24: 27 suggests the relation of the New Testament to the Old Testament: "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

Old Testament Ideas in the New Testament. Christ, teaching the Jews, used the words and ideas which the Jews understood. Christianity, beginning its work among the Jews, naturally used Jewish forms of thought to convey Christian ideas. This would be necessary even if the Old Testament had not been a special preparation for the New Testament, and if Judaism had not been a special preparation for Christianity. But inasmuch as the Jews were the people of God, whose whole history was a preparation for the coming of Christ, we may well expect to find that the ideas of the New Testament are expressed in the forms and figures of Jewish religious thinking and experience. So when John the Baptist, pointing the disciples to Jesus, said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" he was expressing in terms of the Jewish sacrifice the great truth proclaimed in the gospel, that Jesus is the Saviour from sin.

The Covenant. The people of Israel were the covenant people of God. The prominent place which the idea of the covenant between God and his chosen people has in the Old Testament will be evident to anyone who looks up the word "covenant" in a concordance of the Bible. The Jews looked upon themselves as the covenant people of God and expected the special promises of God to be fulfilled for them. They were "the children of Abraham." The idea is carried over into the New Testament and into the Christian Church, but the covenant is the covenant between God and the true Israel, the Israel of faith, not Israel by physical descent. So John the Baptist said, "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. 3: 8, 9. So Paul wrote, "For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel," Rom. 9: 6, and, to the Galatians: "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God," Gal. 6: 15, 16.

Transition. We find therefore in the New Testament that there is a transition from Judaism to Christianity, from the Old Testament to the New Testament. We find this transition in government and in law. The Mosaic law consisted in part of laws of civil government. The Jewish national government was a theocracy. God was Israel's King. But

in relation to government two changes were taking place. The Christian Church was spreading throughout the Roman Empire ruled by a heathen emperor and the Jewish state was passing away. With the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, the Jewish nation would cease to exist as a nation. We find also a second transition. The Old Testament had its tabernacle and then its Temple with their sacrifices and rites, and the feasts which must be observed in Jerusalem. But soon the Temple would be destroyed and these rites and feasts which were bound to the Temple and Jerusalem must cease. Jesus foretold the destruction of the Temple. Mark 13: 1, 2 and parallel passages. These rites and ceremonies, therefore, must pass away. But in the Old Testament also are incorporated great moral and spiritual teachings which are permanent. These would still be binding upon the hearts and lives of men.

An Epistle to the Jewish Christians. Judaism had driven Christianity from its fold. The Judaizers, largely because of the clear teaching and unwavering loyalty of Paul, failed to carry over the Jewish practices into the Christian Church. But there were Jewish converts to Christianity who were not quite happy over the loss of so much that they had learned to value in the Jewish religion. They were tempted to turn back from the simple and spiritual faith and practice of the Christian Church to the more elaborate ceremonies of Judaism. These Jewish believers in Jesus needed to see that all that was foreshadowed in the Old Testament ritual was fulfilled and surpassed

in the life and work and person of Jesus. To show that the believer in Jesus has all and more than the truest Israelite of the Old Testament dispensation is the purpose of the great Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Author. The Epistle to the Hebrews, supposed to have been written just before the fall of Jerusalem, is anonymous. The oldest manuscripts do not bear the name of an author in the title, and the epistle itself, contrary to the practice of Paul, does not give the name of the author. Its authorship has always been disputed. The early Eastern Church ascribed it to Paul; the early Western Church denied that he was its author. Added to its difference in style as compared with the epistles which bear the name of Paul, is the implication in ch. 2: 3, that the writer, like his hearers, had heard the gospel second-hand, while Paul was always careful to assert that he had received the gospel direct from Christ himself. The epistle was early ascribed to Barnabas. Some thought that it was written or translated from Hebrew by Luke. Luther and others have urged that it was written by Apollos. Two points are generally agreed upon, however: the author is not certainly known, but the epistle certainly belongs among the books of the New Testament.

Where and to Whom Written. We do not even know where the epistle was written or to what locality it was addressed. Some have argued that it was written to Jewish Christians in Jerusalem; others believe that it was sent to Jewish Christians in Pales-

tine; others that it was intended for Jewish Christians in Alexandria; and still others that it was sent to Jewish Christians in Rome. We do not know. But the fact is clear that the epistle was written to show Jewish Christians that Christianity fulfills all that was typified in the Old Testament religion; that Christ is the reality of which the Old Testament rites and ceremonies were but the shadows.

The Message of the Epistle. Throughout The Epistle to the Hebrews we find an exhortation to loyalty to Christ. Ch. 2: 1–4; 6: 4–12. To turn back from following Christ for the sake of the Jewish religious rites would be like the Children of Israel turning back from the promised liberty of Canaan to the bondage of Egypt. Ch. 3: 7–19. The author urges loyalty to Christ in spite of trial and persecution. Ch. 12: 1-13. And why should believers in Jesus be disheartened if they are cast out of Judaism and forfeit its privileges? They must be ready to withdraw from the camp of Israel even as Jesus was willing to go outside the city to be crucified. Ch. 13: 12, 13.

The whole argument of the epistle is that in Christ the believer has all that Judaism offered, and more. Christianity has a better message than Judaism. God indeed spoke in the Old Testament through the prophets, but in the New Testament he has spoken through his Son. Ch. 1: 1, 2. Christ is superior to all other teachers. He is Heir of all things, the Creator, the Image of God, the Upholder of all things, superior to heavenly beings, exalted at the right hand

of God. Chs. 1: 2–14; 2: 5–9. Judaism gave supreme place to Moses, but Jesus is as much greater than Moses as a son is greater than a servant. Ch. 3: 3–6. Judaism made much of the priesthood: "For every high priest, being taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." Ch. 5: 1, 2. But Jesus is superior to Israel's priesthood of the house of Aaron. He is a priest after the new order of Melchizedek, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life," ch. 7: 3. His sacrifice is better than all the offerings of tabernacle or Temple, for "now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," ch. 9: 26. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Ch. 9: 14. The high priest of Israel once a year went into the Holy Place in the tabernacle and the Temple to offer the blood of the sacrifice and make intercession for the people. But in Christ we have a Mediator who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" because he was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," ch. 4: 15. Believers in Jesus have not lost the blessings of the covenant of Israel, but in Christ have a Mediator of a better covenant. Chs. 8: 6; 9: 15; 12: 24. Jewish Christians might feel that they had lost much because Christianity replaces forms and ceremonies, things which can be seen and felt, by

things which are spiritual and which cannot be seen with the eyes or felt with the fingers. But the great realities after all are the unseen realities of faith. Ch. 11: 1. The great heroes of the Old Testament, the heroes of Judaism, were men and women of faith in the unseen. Ch. 11. The Christian therefore puts his faith not in forms or ceremonies which are seen and felt, but in the great spiritual realities of Christ.

Summary. Christianity grew out of Judaism but is superior to Judaism because Christianity has Christ, who is the fulfillment of all the hopes and promises of Judaism as expressed in the Old Testament Scriptures. The Christian Church shares with Judaism the Old Testament Scriptures. The New Testament quotes the Old Testament, carries over many of the ideas and uses many of the forms and figures of the Old Testament to express New Testament truth. The Christian Church, however, became independent of the national laws of the Old Testament, and gave up the ceremonial rites of the Old Testament, but held fast to the great moral and spiritual truths revealed through "the prophets." Believers in Christ inherit the blessings of the covenant of God's people; they have a better high priest and a better sacrifice. All that Judaism had to offer, Christianity offers to believers as spiritual realities laid hold upon by faith.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Count and look up all the marginal references to Old Testament books in connection with one of the books of the New

Testament. Take, for example, Hebrews, Romans, or I Corinthians.

2. In a concordance look up every instance of the use of the word "fulfilled" in connection with the fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New Testament. Make a list of these and by means of the marginal references note the passages of the Old Testament thus referred to.

3. Trace the influence of the Old Testament in giving form to one prominent Christian idea, such as the meaning of "God," the meaning of "Christ," the expression "Lamb of God," the words "sacrifice," "high priest," or "atonement."

4. Trace the idea of covenant in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. See article on "covenant" in a Bible dictionary and also look up the texts in the Bible in which the word occurs.

5. What change in attitude toward the Old Testament was to be expected in the Christian Church: (*a*) in view of the commission to the Church to proclaim the gospel to all nations; (*b*) in view of the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and types in Christ; (*c*) in view of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple?

6. What was the purpose of The Epistle to the Hebrews? Consult a Bible dictionary or a commentary on the epistle.

7. Make an outline of The Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
- According to Matthew
- According to Mark
- According to Luke
- According to John

The Acts

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews

James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AND HUMAN PHILOSOPHY

Scripture Material to Be Read: Acts, ch. 17; I Cor., ch. 2; Col., ch. 2

The Problem of the Chapter. In the preceding chapter we considered the attitude of the New Testament Church toward the Scriptures and institutions of Judaism. The Christian Church, because of its world-wide mission to Gentiles as well as to Jews, had to deal with nations which did not have the teachings of the prophets of Israel and their traditions, but which had the ideas and views that had come to them through their own teachers. What was the attitude of the New Testament Church toward human reason and toward the learning and philosophy of the Gentiles?

The New Testament Church and the Human Mind. Jesus was the Master Teacher. He understood that his task was to put truth into a form, and present it by a method, adapted to his disciples or learners. He said to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16: 12. He recognized the limitations of the mental processes of men. He used the forms of thought to which his hearers were accustomed and

expanded these forms to hold the new truth he wished to teach. So clearly did Jesus use methods of teaching which were adapted to the nature of the mind that almost every new theory of education which has any value can be illustrated from the teaching of Jesus. So the New Testament Church, led by men who had sat at the feet of the great Teacher, recognized the limitations of the human mind and employed sane and sound principles and methods for the teaching of the truth which the Church had for the world. When Paul was at Lystra, where the people knew only heathen gods, he skillfully endeavored to make known to them the one true God by taking advantage of those general ideas which they had acquired through their experience and observation. Acts 14: 14–18. Paul's famous address at Athens is another illustration of the adaptation of Christian truth to the mind of the hearer. The various New Testament books illustrate this practice of recognizing the natural operations of the human mind. As we shall see in later chapters, each of the gospels was written for a special audience. The various epistles are adapted to the thought and environment of their readers. The New Testament Church recognized the necessity of putting truth in a way adapted to reach the minds of learners.

The New Testament Church Appealed to Reason. Jesus did not hesitate to say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," and "he taught them as one having authority," but he also reasoned with them.

From a premise he reasoned to a conclusion. He matched wits with the intellectual men of his day. When he was accused of casting out demons by the power of the prince of demons, his reply was a pure appeal to reason: "How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand," Mark 3: 23, 24. When Jesus had cleansed the Temple the rulers of the Temple asked him by what authority he did these things. Jesus answered them by a question which was an intellectual exposure of the insincerity and incapacity of his critics. Mark 11: 27–33. So the apostles also appealed to reason. They reasoned from the Scriptures, appealing to the judgment of men as to whether their conclusions were sound. They reasoned from accepted facts to logical conclusions from those accepted facts. The New Testament Church did not dethrone reason. When Paul addressed the Athenian Epicurean and Stoic philosophers he showed that the Athenian religious practices were illogical. Acts 17: 24–29. The epistles of the New Testament are in large part arguments from accepted truths to other truths which follow from them. Peter was not talking about the reason alone when he wrote, "Girding up the loins of your mind," but certainly New Testament Christianity called men to real thinking. The "darkened" mind was lamented. Rom. 1: 21. Reason was given its place. True Christianity has always been the champion of education. In history there has been a vital connection between the things symbolized by the church spire and by the little red schoolhouse.

The Limitations of Reason. While appealing to reason, the New Testament recognized the limitations of reason. To Nicodemus Jesus said, "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things?" The truth Jesus taught had not been discovered by this Jewish student. In his address at Athens Paul gave a picture of man's vain search after a knowledge of God, when he spoke of men feeling after God to find him, though he was not far from each one of them, "for in him we live, and move, and have our being," Acts 17: 27, 28. In his essay on "Philosophy" in "The Legacy of Greece," J. Burnet tells us that Plato, the great Greek philosopher, "has left us the first systematic defence of Theism we know of, and it is based entirely on his doctrine of soul as the selfmover. But the highest soul, or God, is not only the ultimate source of motion, but also supremely good." And yet Plato, with all his powers of reason, was not able to give to the world the Christian conception of God. Writing to Corinth Paul said, "The world through its wisdom knew not God." This is the position of the New Testament Church. It recognized the nature of the human mind to which truth is to be made known; it appealed to reason and made use of argument and logic; but it declared that through human reason the truth about God and the way of life could not be discovered. Philosophy is man's search for truth; revelation is God's making truth known to man.

A Message from God. The New Testament Church therefore declared that it had a message

from God which man by his reasoning could not discover for himself. The message of the New Testament is a message which came out of heaven. "He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he speaketh: he that cometh from heaven is above all. What he hath seen and heard, of that he beareth witness; and no man receiveth his witness. He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by measure." John 3: 31–34. And Matthew records: "At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." Matt. 11: 25, 26.

We need not be surprised therefore to find this same idea running through the whole New Testament and dominating the Church as it proclaimed its message. The Church had a message from God for the world. In his earliest epistle Paul called his message "the gospel of God," I Thess. 2: 8, and in v. 13 he said, "When ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe." In his Epistle to the Galatians he insisted that his message did not come through human sources. Ch. 1: 11, 12. Paul's point was that he was on an equality with the other apostles who likewise had received the gospel direct from Jesus, who had come

out of heaven. The gospel was a message committed to men, not discovered or thought out by men. Paul speaks of "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed" to his trust. I Tim. 1: 11. The Church's Commission was "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." Matt. 28: 19, 20.

The Conflict Between the Church and Human Philosophy. J. Burnet, in his essay referred to above, defines the meaning of "philosophy" as used by the Greeks, as "a serious endeavor to understand the world and man, having for its chief aim the discovery of the right way of life and the conversion of people to it." In delivering its message, concerning the character of God, the nature of man, the way of salvation in Christ, and the call to faith and repentance and obedience, the Church was bound to come into conflict with human philosophy.

In the account of Paul's visit to Athens, The Acts names two Greek schools of philosophy, the Epicureans and the Stoics. We are not concerned here with the teaching of these philosophers, but with Paul's attitude toward them. We observe that Paul began his address in a way which would win their sympathetic attention without in the least yielding any Christian truth. He was ready to avail himself of any truth which he had found in their systems. Indeed he quoted one of the Greek poets. The quotation, "For we are also his off-

spring," Acts 17: 28, is found, word for word, in the poem of Aratus, a physician of Cilicia, Paul's native province, who lived about 270 B.C. This is an astronomical poem entitled *Phaenomena*. The following translation of a part of this poem is taken from the "People's Commentary on Acts," by Edwin W. Rice:

> From Zeus begin we: Never let us leave
> His name unloved. With him, with Zeus, are filled
> All paths we tread, and all the marts of men:
> Filled too the sea, and every creek and bay:
> And all in all things need we help of Zeus,
> For we, too, are his offspring.

Similar words are found, however, in the "Hymn to Zeus," by Cleanthes, a stoic philosopher who succeeded Zenos, the founder of Stoicism in Athens. This is said to be one of the purest and noblest pieces of poetry in the Greek language. We should expect the Stoic philosophers of Athens to recall this poem as Paul spoke. In "The Vitality of Platonism and Other Essays," James Adam, of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, gives the following translation of part of this hymn:

> O God most glorious, called by many a name,
> Nature's great King, through endless years the same;
> Omnipotence, who by thy just decree
> Controllest all, hail, Zeus, for unto thee
> Behoves thy creatures in all lands to call.
> We are thy children, we alone, of all
> On earth's broad ways that wander to and fro,
> Bearing thine image wheresoe'er we go.
> Wherefore with songs of praise thy power I will forth show.

A. R. Gordon in the article on "Quotations" in the "Dictionary of the Apostolic Church" calls attention to Rendel Harris' recent tracing of Paul's words, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being," to the "Minos" of Epimenides, an ancient Greek poet of Crete, whom Paul quotes in Titus 1: 12. The following translation of the text quoted there is by W. D'Arcy Stephens:

> A burial place they cunningly devised
> For thee, O God most glorious, most high—
> Those all-deceitful Cretans, those wild beasts,
> With evil minds and stomachs sleek with food.
> But thou art not to die; forevermore
> Alive thou standest, and in thee we breathe
> And move about and are alive ourselves.

But we should observe that in his encounter with the philosophers of Athens, Paul, while ready to quote their poets and teachers, declared that he had a message which the seekers after truth could not find for themselves. He had come to declare a message from the God whom the Athenians worshiped in ignorance, a message of repentance and of judgment, the message of Jesus who died and rose again from the dead—the "gospel."

From Athens Paul went to Corinth, another Greek city, where he preached the gospel as "the testimony of God." In the second chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians he discusses his attitude toward human wisdom as over against the wisdom of God revealed in the gospel committed to the Church. Read this chapter and study Paul's teaching. Paul's message was the simple message of Jesus crucified.

His aim was to lead the people to put their faith in the power of God and not in the wisdom of men. The wisdom which he offered was not man's wisdom but the wisdom which God revealed. He was eager that his hearers and readers "might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth."

Various forms of "human" teaching were encountered from time to time in the churches. In his letter to the Colossians he refers to "philosophy." The word would indicate better what is meant if it were translated "theosophy," for what Paul referred to was not a philosophy like that of the Greeks, but a strange mixture of Jewish ceremonialism and Oriental dreams which were taught as "secrets" too sacred to be committed to writing. This teaching was probably a forerunner of what was later known as Gnosticism. With this teaching of men Paul deals in the second chapter of Colossians. The truth, Paul declares, is revealed in Christ. Understanding is found in knowing "the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden." "Take heed," he urges, "lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full."

In the New Testament all truth is summed up in Christ, and the test of all teaching is its relation to the revelation of Christ.

Summary. The New Testament Church recognized the place of human reason. Its message was to be adapted to the minds which were to receive it. The New Testament Church appealed to reason, seeking to prove from accepted facts the soundness of its message and the consistency of its teaching. But the New Testament Church taught that man by wisdom cannot find out God. Human reason had failed as the source of truth concerning God and men and the way of life. The "gospel" was the message from God to men, supernaturally revealed in Christ. The values in human philosophy were to be recognized and accepted. Christianity availed itself of all the assured products of human thought, but in case of conflict the revealed gospel of Christ was the final appeal. When the conclusions of human reason denied the nature of God as revealed in the Scriptures, or the nature and work of Christ, or the nature and needs of man, or the way of life taught by Jesus, the New Testament rejected this teaching as both deficient and false.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. In the light of the attitude of the New Testament toward the human mind what should be the Church's attitude to-day toward new teaching principles and methods?

2. What was the attitude of Christ and the apostles toward the appeal to reason in teaching Christian truth?

3. What limitations of human reason as a source of truth did the New Testament recognize?

4. What was the attitude of the New Testament Church toward its "gospel"?

5. What was the attitude of the New Testament Church toward human learning?

6. What test must be met by any teaching before it could be accepted by the New Testament Church?

For students who are ready for them, the following additional questions are suggested:

7. What was the teaching of the Epicureans, and wherein did it differ from the teaching of Paul?

8. What was the teaching of the Stoics, and wherein did it differ from the teaching of Paul?

9. What was meant by "philosophy" in Col. 2: 8?

10. What was probably meant by "knowledge [Greek *gnosis*] which is falsely so called"? I Tim. 6: 20.

For questions 7, 8, 9, and 10, see the article on "Philosophy" in a good Bible dictionary and in the "Dictionary of the Apostolic Church"; also articles on "Epicureans," "Stoics," and "Gnostics," and the index of Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul."

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHURCH AND ITS TEMPTATIONS

Scripture Material to Be Read: I and II Peter; I, II, and III John; Jude

The Problem of the Chapter. What needs of the New Testament Church were met by the books which are known as the General Epistles?

The Epistles of the New Testament. We have already considered The Epistle of James, which was probably the earliest New Testament book and was written to the scattered congregations of Jewish Christians. We have considered also the epistles of Paul, which were written from time to time during his ministry largely to meet specific needs of which he became aware in his oversight of the churches he had established and in his interest in the Church at large. I and II Thessalonians are the earliest. Galatians was written to meet the issue raised by the Judaizers. I and II Corinthians dealt with questions and practical problems in the church in Corinth. Romans presents in a systematic way Paul's gospel. During his first imprisonment Paul wrote Colossians and Ephesians, with their lofty doctrinal teaching concerning Christ, Philippians with its friendly message from the heart of the apostle, and Philemon with its personal appeal to a

friend. After his release and during his second imprisonment Paul wrote his Pastoral Epistles to Timothy and to Titus, to guide these ministers in the organization and teaching of the churches. The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to show Jewish Christians that in Christ and the gospel all that was foreshadowed in the Old Testament was fulfilled. But among the books of the New Testament we find another group of epistles, different from these just mentioned because of their general character both in regard to their teaching and in regard to the persons to whom they are addressed. These are known as the General Epistles.

The General Epistles. The General Epistles belong in the same group with The Epistle of James which was considered in Chapter VI. The epistles are called "general" because they are not addressed to individual churches or to particular people, but to believers in general over a wide area. This is true of all these epistles except II and III John. These two short letters were early attached to I John, and so grouped with the other epistles as "general." Concerning the time and place and circumstances of the writing of the General Epistles there is wide difference of opinion. Some scholars place them early in the apostolic history, while others place them late, and the problem of each must be studied separately. For our purpose there is little need of attempting to locate each of these epistles in time, as our aim is to see what light they throw upon the general experience of the Church in New Testament

times, and particularly what they reveal concerning the difficulties and temptations and trials with which the New Testament Christians met. The General Epistles are of special value because they are so general and do not deal with particular situations or problems in a single church or in a closely related group of churches as did so many of the epistles of the Apostle Paul.

The First Epistle of Peter. The writer of the First Epistle of Peter characterizes himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." Ch. 1: 1. There can be no doubt that the Apostle Peter is meant, and it is significant that no claim is made to any authority different from that of other apostles. He is merely an apostle among apostles. The letter is written from "Babylon," ch. 5: 13. Some scholars are quite positive that "Babylon" is used in a symbolic sense and means Rome. Others are quite as sure that it means the real Babylon, and that Peter wrote the epistle from the East. The letter is addressed to the "sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Clearly the message is for Christians throughout what to-day we would call Asia Minor.

The writer seems to indicate that Christians were living in a very unsettled state. He calls his readers "sojourners," or exiles. Ch. 1: 1, 17; 2: 11. This may mean that the Christians have been exiled from their homes, or it may mean that conditions are such that the Christians realize how temporary this world is; they are pilgrims on the earth. Since they are of

"the Dispersion," they are to be considered as scattered from Jerusalem.

Whether those to whom this letter was addressed were Jewish Christians or Gentiles has been debated. The Dispersion would seem to indicate that they were Jewish Christians, but ch. 2: 10—"who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God"—would seem to indicate that they were Gentiles. No doubt the churches included both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul had plainly told the Thessalonian Christians that they must expect to experience suffering as Christians. I Thess. 3: 4, 5. This was almost the universal experience in the Apostolic Church. So the scattered Christians to whom Peter wrote were passing through "fire" for their faith. Ch. 1: 6, 7; 4: 12–16.

Christians would experience the conflict with paganism. This conflict might be within the family. Perhaps a husband would be won to Christ and have to contend with a pagan wife, or a wife might become a Christian and would have to endure opposition on the part of her husband. Ch. 3: 1–7. Because a person was a Christian he would meet with difficulty in the community. Christians were watched with jealous and critical eyes by their neighbors. Ch. 2: 12. The Christians' beliefs and standards of conduct would be different from those of their pagan neighbors. Peter urges Christians to be faithful under such trying circumstances. They are to be open in their testimony for Christ, able to defend their beliefs and to give a reason for their hope, and to endure opposition patiently. Ch. 3: 13–22.

Evidently it was not easy for the Christians to yield to civil authority. Laws were proclaimed against them, and their sense of liberty would make these laws galling, but Peter insists that Christians must endeavor to be law-abiding no matter how difficult this may be. Ch. 2: 13–17; 4: 15, 16.

The members of the Christian Church would find themselves in difficulty in their relations to society. There were the relationships of servant and master. A Christian slave might expect harsh treatment at the hands of a heathen master. This is one of the trials to which Peter refers as he urges Christian household servants to render faithful service even to unreasonable and persecuting masters.

Besides these trials and temptations from without, Christians would have to fight those temptations which come from within. They were called to holy living, ch. 1: 13–16, and so they would have to fight evil thoughts and desires which are so natural to the human heart, ch. 2: 1; they would have to fight the passions and lusts which are natural to the human body, ch. 4: 1–6; and they would have to overcome the spirit of selfishness and be generous in their hospitality, ch. 4: 7–11.

Amidst such conditions as these the Christian churches were heroically endeavoring to maintain themselves and to minister to their members and to carry on their work in the community. Ch. 5: 1–4. The ministers of the churches are urged to overcome the natural temptations of their office, and the members of the churches are urged to be submissive to those who are in authority over them and to be

faithful and earnest in their Christian living. Ch. 5: 5–9.

Are not many of these trials to which Peter refers the same commonplace temptations and difficulties which the Church encounters to-day?

The Second Epistle of Peter. A second epistle bears as the name of the writer, "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." This is one of the epistles whose authorship has been debated. Because of difference in style from I Peter, because of references which some think imply conditions which were later than the time of the Apostle Peter, the argument has been made that the epistle did not come from the pen of Peter. However, the epistle claims to have been written by him. The writer refers to a previous epistle which he had written, ch. 3: 1, and an analysis of the letter shows many parallels between it and events in Peter's experience, and also parallels to other New Testament utterances of this apostle. The writer of the epistle is facing death. Ch. 1: 14. Assuming that the letter was written by Peter, and that he died in Rome about A.D. 68, the letter was probably written from Rome about A.D. 68.

About what was the writer of this epistle concerned? The greatest danger seems to have been the danger of false teachers, as was the case when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Colossians and his Pastoral Epistles. "Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the

truth which is with you. . . . Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance." II Peter 1: 12, 15.

Two chief errors in the teaching and practice of the churches are indicated. The first of these is a denial of Jesus as he was preached by the apostles and as he is presented in the New Testament Scriptures. Ch. 2: 1. Closely related to this error in faith is error in practice. Error in doctrine led to error in living. Ch. 2: 2. One of the errors was what has been called "antinomianism," or setting aside the law. The gospel proclaimed the forgiveness of sin and salvation by faith in Christ. Understanding only one side of the truth, the Antinomians interpreted Christian liberty as a deliverance from all requirement of the moral law. Being under grace and not under the law, they therefore set aside the Christian standards of conduct and advocated sinful license. This is what is referred to when the epistle says that some "wrested" the writings of Paul from their true meaning.

Another problem in the Church was raised by the hope of the immediate return of Christ. The first generation of Christians was passing away. Peter's death was at hand. The insinuation was made that the expected return of Christ was a false hope. The failure of Christ to appear was causing doubt and concern on the part of Christians and ridicule on the part of unbelievers. Instead of some expected cataclysm, the world seemed to move on as it had since its creation. Peter therefore insists that Christ will return, that his warnings and his promises will

be fulfilled, but that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. Ch. 3: 1–13.

Quite appropriately the epistle closes with the hortatory benediction: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The Epistle of Jude. Another epistle bears the name of "Jude," or Judas, "a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." The most natural interpretation is that this is Jude, the brother of our Lord, mentioned in Matt. 13: 55; Mark 6: 3. "It is quite possible that a younger brother of Jesus, whose missionary labors had led him into Gentile-Christian circles, may have written the letter about A.D. 80–90." Warfield has said that the epistle was intended for Jewish Christians living in Palestine. The most striking fact about the epistle is that verses 4–18, with the exception of verses 14 and 15, are reproduced in II Peter 2: 1 to 3: 3. Assuming the genuineness of II Peter, we must conclude that Jude was familiar with that letter and quoted from it, or that Peter quoted from Jude. Two needs suggested by II Peter are prominent in this epistle also—true faith in Jesus Christ and holy living. Vs. 3, 4, 17–23. The book ends with a benediction which is frequently used in the Church to-day.

The Epistles of John. Grouped with the General Epistles are three Epistles of John. The Second and Third Epistles are very short and personal. None of the three epistles bears the name of John, but in

the Church from the very earliest times they have been ascribed to him. The suggestion has been made that because of persecution the name of the writer was not given, but the recipients of the letters would recognize him immediately. The First Epistle resembles the Gospel by John in so many respects that they seem to be by the same author. The letters were probably written toward the end of the first century, near the close of John's life, and probably from Ephesus. The first four verses of the epistle resemble the beginning of the Fourth Gospel and fit into the life of John. Outstanding words in the epistle are "light," "life," "love," and "truth," as characteristics of God and of Christians. The frequent use of the word "world" in the epistle indicates that the apostle saw the conflict in the life of the believer in Jesus who tried to be "in the world, but not of it." He is concerned about false teaching in regard to Jesus, especially the denial that he is the Son of God who came in the flesh. Ch. 2: 22; 4: 1–6. He deals with such subjects as sin, worldliness, purity, service, love, faith, and holy living.

The Second Epistle is addressed to "the elect lady and her children," which some interpret as being a church and its members while others take this as a personal letter to a Christian woman. In this letter again we find anxiety about the truth, not merely as something to be believed but as something to be lived. A warning is sounded against false teachers who are going about leading believers away from the teaching of Christ.

The Third Epistle is addressed to Gaius, but who

Gaius was we do not know. His Christian hospitality is commended and the self-seeking of Diotrephes is denounced. Demetrius, of whom also we know nothing, is praised.

Summary. There are seven epistles which are grouped together in the New Testament as General Epistles, although two of these, II and III John, are personal and local rather than general. The Epistle of James belongs very early in the history of the Church and was considered in an earlier chapter. The rest of the epistles reveal the struggles and the temptations and trials of the Christians in the later days of the apostles. The Christians often endured persecution, but always had to struggle against the influence of non-Christian surroundings. Often in their homes and nearly always in their communities they found it difficult to live up to their ideals. They had to struggle against the temptations from within as well as with difficulties from without. They had to guard against teachers of false doctrine and morals. They were "in" the world, but as followers of Jesus they were not to be "of" the world. To help believers amidst such conditions, Peter and John and Jude wrote their letters of exhortation and encouragement and these letters have been preserved as books of the New Testament.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Name the books of the New Testament usually included in the group of "General Epistles." Which are not strictly "general"? See a Bible dictionary under "Epistles" or "General Epistles," or "New Testament."

2. What does The First Epistle of Peter itself indicate concerning its author, the place of writing, and its destination? Check up your own conclusions with the statements and interpretations to be found in a commentary or in the article on the epistle in a Bible dictionary.

3. What experiences of Christians in Asia Minor are indicated in I Peter? Compare these experiences with the experiences of Christians to-day. Which of these conflicts do Christians experience to-day?

4. What is meant by antinomianism and what has The Second Epistle of Peter to say about this error? Read the epistle and look up antinomianism in a dictionary or encyclopedia. Information will be found also in a commentary on II Peter.

5. Find for yourself and write in parallel columns all the passages which are common to both II Peter and Jude. Which one would you think quoted the previously existing letter of the other? Why?

6. State the reasons in favor of the Apostle John as the author of The First Epistle of John. See a Bible dictionary under "First Epistle of John" or a commentary on the epistle.

7. Read through The First Epistle of John and note every time the word "world" occurs. Gather these texts together and on the basis of these texts write a statement concerning the Christian's relation to the world.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
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I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XX

THE CHURCH AND PERSECUTION

Scripture Material to Be Read: Revelation

The Problem of the Chapter. What is the purpose and message of the book of Revelation?

The Church a Persecuted Institution. Jesus warned his disciples that they must expect to experience persecution. Those were not unique words which he spoke in Matt. 10: 22, but words which were characteristic of his teaching: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Paul warned the Thessalonian Christians that they must expect to experience persecution. I Thess. 3: 4, 5. I Peter 4: 12–14, as we noted in the preceding chapter, spoke of the "fiery trial" through which the believers in Jesus were passing. The story of the Church has been a story of persecutions.

The believers in Jesus were first persecuted by the Jews, and Stephen, the first Christian martyr, died at the hands of infuriated opponents without the formality of a trial. The persecution which followed, under the leadership of Saul of Tarsus, was a persecution by the Jewish authorities. Wherever the missionaries went, the synagogues were hotbeds of opposition.

The opposition to the Church seemed to take a new

turn when "Herod the king" laid hands upon leaders of the Church and beheaded James the brother of John, for this was the act of a Roman official. For some time, however, the Christians were protected from Jewish persecution by the Roman authorities. Rome had long had on her statute books laws against the introduction of new deities, and the worship of the emperor was commanded, but the application of these laws to the Christians was left largely to the discretion of local officials. The time came, however, when the Roman emperor assumed the role of persecutor of the Christian Church. There were in the first century two great periods of persecution under the authority of Rome—the reign of Nero and the reign of Domitian. In his "History of the Christian Church," George P. Fisher summarizes the situation briefly. The withdrawal of Christians from employments and diversions which involved the countenancing of heathen worship or immorality led to the charge that Christians were unsocial. The absence of any images in their worship led to the accusation that they were atheists. The demand of repentance and holy living aroused resentment. The attitude toward the Christians, soon after the burning of Rome, in the reign of Nero, who died A.D. 68, is indicated by the Roman historian Tacitus: "A vast multitude were convicted, not so much on the charge of making the conflagration, as of hating the human race. And in their deaths they were made the subjects of sport, for they were covered with hides of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set fire to, and when the day declined were burned to

serve for nocturnal lights." Under Domitian about A.D. 95, Christians were subjected to savage persecution. The charge against them was atheism, because the followers of Christ denied the Roman gods and rejected all images in their worship.

The Book of Revelation. One of the books of the New Testament was written for the comfort and encouragement of Christians in such times of persecution. This is the book of Revelation. William Milligan, in "The Expositor's Bible," says: "The more Christians are compelled to feel that the world hates them, and that they cannot be its friends, the greater to them will be the power and beauty of this book. Its revelations, like the stars of the sky, shine brightly in the cold, dark night." The book was intended to be read in the churches, especially in times of persecution. Moffatt translates ch. 1: 3: "Blessed is he who reads aloud, blessed they who hear the words of this prophecy and lay to heart what is written in it." There is no book in the New Testament concerning which there is so much difference of opinion, but amidst all these differences of opinion all can agree upon one point, namely, that the book was written to comfort and encourage Christians in the time of persecution.

The book of Revelation represents persecution as rampant in Asia. Conditions in Ephesus called for patience. Ch. 2: 2. In Smyrna there was tribulation. Ch. 2: 10. Antipas had suffered as a martyr in Pergamum. Ch. 2: 13. If Revelation represents conditions at the time, the saints were slain, ch. 6: 9,

and put to death with the ax, ch. 20: 4, and persecutors were drunk with the martyrs' blood, ch. 16: 6; 17: 6; 18: 24; 19: 2.

A Different Kind of Book. No one can read very far in the book of Revelation without discovering that it is different from other books in the New Testament. In the very first chapter is a description of Jesus which is different from any description found in the books thus far considered. This picture is symbolic. The various details in the description represent ideas instead of appearance. From the fourth chapter on we find that the book presents visions in which symbolic figures have a large place, a very different method of teaching Christian truth from that followed in the other books of the New Testament.

The book is called a "prophecy." Ch. 1: 3. A prophet was one who delivered the message of God to men; he was God's spokesman. The prophet of Old Testament times was a messenger of God who told men what God would have them believe and do. His message concerned largely the duty of the people to whom he spoke, but he often spoke of the future. Because there were predictions in the messages of the prophets, too often we think of prophecy as being exclusively prediction. However, the book of Revelation was a prophecy concerning "things to come." At the same time it was and is a message for the living, for their comfort and encouragement in their own experiences.

The Greek word for "revelation" is *apokalupsis*.

from which we get our word "apocalypse." The word means revelation, but because of the resemblance of Revelation to certain books of Jewish and Christian literature, some of them in the Old Testament, the word "apocalyptic" is applied to books or writings characterized by figurative or symbolic language, which deal especially with the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the earth in spite of opposition and persecution on the part of the enemies of God. The Book of Daniel is an apocalyptic book of the Old Testament. Ezekiel also contains apocalyptic portions. It is interesting to note that of the more than one thousand quotations from the Old Testament which Westcott and Hort list in their Greek New Testament, more than three hundred and fifty are found in Revelation. Over fifty of these are from Daniel, and almost fifty are from Ezekiel.

The Author of the Book. The author of the book of Revelation is "John." Ch. 1: 4, 9; 22: 8. There has been difference of opinion in the Church concerning what John this is. However, the most widely accepted view is that the book was written by the Apostle John, the brother of James and the son of Zebedee. The last reference to John in The Acts is in the statement of ch. 15: 6, in connection with the council in Jerusalem, that "the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter." We know that John was one of these, for in Gal. 2: 9, evidently referring to the same incident, Paul says that he talked with James and Cephas and John. Little more is known certainly about John,

but the testimony of the early Church seems to leave little doubt that John lived and worked for some time in Ephesus and had the oversight of the churches of the territory of which Ephesus was the chief city. He was banished because of his Christian testimony and was exiled on the island of Patmos, one of the Sporades, in the Grecian Archipelago. He lived to be a very old man and probably died some time in the last decade of the first century. The book of Revelation was certainly written by a Jewish Christian familiar with both Jewish teaching and Christian doctrine. The fact has been pointed out that there is a difference of style between the Fourth Gospel and Revelation, but, as Purves says, "examination, as well as the steadfast tradition of the Church, makes the division of authorship both improbable and unnecessary."

The Time of the Book. Concerning the time when the book was written by John there are two views. The book belongs to a period of bitter persecution, and so is placed by some in the reign of Nero, and therefore before the fall of Jerusalem, while by others it is placed in the reign of Domitian, about A.D. 95. In favor of the latter is the tradition that John was exiled to Patmos during the reign of Domitian.

The Interpretation of the Book. The book of Revelation is difficult to interpret. The fact that it uses symbols and figures so extensively accounts for this. Interpreters who are quite sure of their own

interpretation of Revelation do not agree with one another. In spite of the great variety of views concerning the interpretation of the book, there is, as has been pointed out, general agreement that Revelation was written to encourage Christians in time of trial and persecution.

The various theories of interpretation are defined differently by different writers. In general there are four views, which for the student may be outlined in very brief form:

1. Some interpreters hold that the book is a description of what was taking place at the time when it was written. This view, however, removes from the book the element of prediction.

2. Another view is that the book deals entirely with the future and predicts events which are to be fulfilled. This would mean that the book did not have a message for the people of the day in which it was written and was to be read.

3. A third view is that the book gives an outline of Christian history and that various visions represent periods of history in their order. But interpreters do not seem to be able to agree concerning the periods of time to which the visions apply.

4. Still other interpreters find in the book great truths or principles which are symbolically represented. These truths had their application at the time in which the book was written and have their application in every age of Christian history.

There may be combinations of these various views or theories, but the most practical use of the book will be in finding what God would say to us for our

exhortation and encouragement in the midst of our trials and conflicts as followers of Christ.

The Letters to the Churches. Revelation begins with an introduction, ch. 1: 1–3, followed by a salutation, ch. 1: 4–8. The book is addressed to the seven churches of Asia, the province of which Ephesus was the capital. In ch. 1: 9–20, John tells of his vision of Jesus and gives a symbolic description of the risen Lord who appeared to him and wished to send his messages to the seven churches. In chapters 2 and 3 he writes the seven letters to the seven churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. In these letters Christ exposes and rebukes the weaknesses and failures of the churches, recognizes the trials they are enduring and the conflicts they are waging, commends their virtues, exhorts to steadfastness and devotion, and offers a reward for endurance unto the end. These letters are full of messages which apply to Christians and to the Church to-day and can be used with great benefit irrespective of any views concerning the interpretation of the book.

A Book of Sevens. The sacred number seven is given a prominent place in the book of Revelation. There are seven main divisions of the book. There are seven letters to the seven churches, the sealed book with the seven decrees and the breaking of the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls or vials. Probably the best known passage in Revelation is the vision of "the holy city, new Jerusalem,

coming down out of heaven from God," ch, 21: 1 to 22: 5. The structure of the book is so involved that it is impracticable to attempt to give an outline in this brief discussion. The student who is especially interested in the book will find an outline in a Bible dictionary, or in a commentary on Revelation.

Summary. The history of the Church confirmed the warning of Jesus that his disciples would experience persecution. At first the persecution of the Church was at the hands of the Jews; later the Roman authorities began to persecute the Christians. There were two periods of especially bitter persecution, the first in the reign of Nero, and the second in the reign of Domitian. In one of these periods of bitter persecution the book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John to comfort and encourage and strengthen the suffering Christians. The book is apocalyptic and difficult to interpret, but it has had a message of comfort and encouragement for persecuted Christians in every age.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Prepare to give a brief survey of the persecutions through which the Church passed in the first century. A long article will be found under "Persecutions" in the "Dictionary of the Apostolic Church." Consult also a Church history, and articles on "Persecution" in some dictionaries of the Bible, or in an encyclopedia.

2. Prepare to give an account of the persecution of the Church under Nero or under Domitian. See references under "1," and articles on "Nero" and "Domitian" in a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia.

3. What was the purpose of the book of Revelation? See a Bible dictionary or a commentary on the book.

4. What is meant by "apocalyptic" literature? See a dictionary or encyclopedia.

5. Who was the author of Revelation and when was the book written? See references under "3."

6. Prepare a map of the province known in the New Testament as Asia and locate the seven churches named in the book of Revelation.

7. Study the letters to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation and prepare an analysis of the seven letters in four parallel columns, noting: (*a*) what trials are mentioned in connection with each church; (*b*) what criticism is made of each church; (*c*) what is commended in each church; and (*d*) what reward for faithfulness is promised to each church.

8. Make a brief outline of the book of Revelation. See a Bible dictionary or a commentary on the book.

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I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XXI

THE CHURCH'S NEED OF THE GOSPELS

Scripture Material to Be Read: Matt., chs. 1 to 3; Mark, ch. 1; Luke, chs. 1 to 3; John, ch. 1

The Problems of the Chapter. What led to the writing of the four Gospels and why are there four accounts in the New Testament of the life and teaching of Jesus?

The Need of the Gospels. The books of the New Testament which we have studied assumed that their readers had a knowledge of Jesus Christ. Without the story of his character and life and teaching there would have been no story of the Church such as is narrated in The Acts. Likewise there would have been no Pauline or General Epistles. These books were written to people who knew of Jesus. Without the life and work and personality of Jesus there could have been no New Testament and no New Testament Church.

When Peter made his address on the day of Pentecost, he talked to an audience who knew Jesus as a real character, as the Teacher who had been crucified and whom the apostles testified had risen again from the dead. When the missionaries went to places where the story of Jesus was not known, they told of Jesus and his life and teaching. Out of their personal

experience the apostles told what Jesus had said and done. Others heard the apostles and repeated what they had heard from the lips of these eyewitnesses. There can be little doubt that the story of Jesus was repeated in much the same words wherever the missionaries went and churches were organized. But the apostles and others who had known Jesus personally and who had listened to Jesus' own words were passing away and there was need of preserving their testimony in accurate and permanent form. Tradition is unreliable. The person who repeats a story may omit something which does not appeal to him or emphasize something which does appeal to him. In this way the true proportions will be lost as time passes, even if the narrative is not seriously garbled. In the early Apostolic Church the need of an authoritative account of the life and teaching of Jesus was felt. Many undertook to write such accounts, but these were unsatisfactory. Perhaps the testimony of the apostles had been recorded, but these records had not been brought together into satisfactory documents. Luke tells us that many had undertaken to draw up narratives concerning Jesus and his teaching, but he felt constrained to write an account, based upon careful investigation, which would be authoritative. Luke 1: 1–4.

Four accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus have come down to us in the New Testament. These are the Gospels According to Matthew, According to Mark, According to Luke, and According to John. Gospel or, in Greek, *euaggelion*, means "good news." These narratives are called Gospels because they tell

the basic story of Jesus who is the Saviour proclaimed in the good news of salvation. We may wonder why there are so few accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus. Surely there were many, many others which have been lost. Evidently these four accounts were so superior to all others that they were generally recognized as authoritative and were preserved, while the others ceased to be copied and circulated and so were lost.

The Sources of the Gospels. Only one of the authors of these four authoritative accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus has told us anything about his method in writing his book or the source of his materials. Luke informs us, ch. 1: 1–4, that the story of Jesus had been heard from the lips of eye-witnesses. He therefore drew his information from the testimony of those who had seen and heard Jesus. But in assembling and arranging his material, he had investigated and checked up to make sure that his account was accurate. Without hesitation we may say that the writers of the Gospels secured their material from records which were available, from persons who had been with Jesus, or they wrote out of their own personal knowledge of the events and conversations which they narrate or describe.

Matthew, who wrote the First Gospel, was a disciple of Jesus, one of the twelve apostles. He was known also as Levi. He could tell much concerning Jesus from what he had himself seen and heard. Through his constant association with the Twelve he would also have heard from them much that may

have happened or have been said when he was not present. Mark, who wrote the Second Gospel, was a comparatively young man when the Christian Church began. His mother was a prominent woman in the Church, and he was a cousin of Barnabas, the first missionary companion of Paul. Mark was a companion of Barnabas and Paul on their First Missionary Journey and heard the story of Jesus as these missionaries told it. He heard the story also from eyewitnesses in Jerusalem. Later he was the companion and "interpreter" of Peter, and heard again and again the vivid account of Jesus' life and teaching which Peter gave as he went about preaching Jesus. Luke, who wrote the Third Gospel, a Gentile convert, was the missionary companion of Paul. He heard the story of Jesus again and again as that story was told by Paul and others in the synagogues and churches. There is little doubt that during the two years Paul was in prison in Cæsarea, Luke improved the time by examining records, talking with witnesses, and gathering the materials and checking up on the facts for his Gospel. Paul, as an opponent of the believers in Jesus, knew thoroughly the side of the story which the Jewish leaders told, so Luke would know what facts he needed to trace down to authoritative sources. Luke tells a number of incidents which are not found in the other Gospels. Among these are: the account of the Annunciation; the presentation in the Temple; Jesus' boyhood in Nazareth and his visit to the Temple as a boy; the miraculous draft of fishes; the sending out of the Seventy; the parables of the Good Samar-

itan, the Barren Fig Tree, the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, Dives and Lazarus, the Importunate Widow, the Pharisee and the Publican, the Ten Pounds; and the visit at the home of Zacchæus. John, who wrote the Fourth Gospel, was peculiarly fitted to write an account of the life and teaching of Jesus. He was one of the earliest of the disciples. Moreover, he was one of the three who were permitted to accompany Jesus where the rest of the disciples were not permitted to go. Out of his own rich experience he could write a very intimate story of his Lord.

Each Gospel Had a Purpose. Similar as some of the Gospels are, we find differences in the narratives which indicate that they were written for slightly different purposes. The account of Jesus' life and teaching which is found in Matthew was evidently intended primarily for Jewish readers. The material is arranged chronologically only in general outline; the author's primary aim was to arrange the material topically. Matthew gives large place to the discourses of Jesus. The Gospel aims to present Jesus as the royal Messiah, and again and again the fulfillment of prophecy by Jesus is pointed out. In Matthew's Gospel there are about a hundred more or less formal quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures.

Mark, the shortest of the Gospels, and the most vivid, is a Gospel of action. This Gospel seems more chronological than either Matthew or Luke. There is little doubt that it was intended for Roman readers,

"and is especially adapted to their mind, so easily impressed by exhibitions of energy and power." This Gospel has several Latin terms and uses Roman names of coins instead of the Greek names. For example, see ch. 12: 42.

Luke's Gospel was written primarily for Theophilus, a Gentile Christian, ch. 1: 3. The narrative of the Gospel was followed by the story of The Acts, addressed to the same Theophilus. Compare Acts 1: 1. It has been suggested that Luke's minute description of places in Palestine indicates that Theophilus did not live in that country, while the mention of small places in Italy as familiarly known, Acts 27: 6–16, makes it probable that his home was at Rome. The Gospel was designed mainly for Gentile readers. Words which Jews would understand readily are explained for Gentile readers. Hebrew names are translated. In Luke 6: 15 we find "Simon who was called the Zealot," while Matthew, ch. 10: 4, says, "Simon the Cananæan." In ch. 23: 33, Luke says, "They came unto the place which is called The skull," while Matthew, ch. 27: 33, uses the Hebrew word, "Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull." Luke sought to provide the information and testimony concerning Jesus which would lead Gentiles to believe in Jesus with assurance.

John wrote his Gospel that those who read his narrative might believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and believing might have "life in his name." Ch. 20: 31. His Gospel is an argument from the life and teaching and character of Jesus for the Deity of Jesus.

The Synoptic Gospels. Even a hasty examination of the four Gospels will show that three of them are much alike, while the fourth is strikingly different. Matthew, Mark, and Luke narrate largely the same events. They have largely a common outline and often use much the same language. For this reason these three Gospels have been called the Synoptic Gospels. The name "synoptic" comes from the Greek word *sunopsis* which means "a seeing together," and is used because these three Gospels give the same view of Jesus. They take for their chief theme the Galilæan ministry of Jesus.

An explanation has been sought of the similarity of the material and language in the Synoptic Gospels. Some have tried to explain the similarity by saying that one Gospel borrowed from another. But the difficulty with this explanation is that Mark, which is the shortest, is not a shortened Luke or Matthew, for Mark in describing an event or scene includes details not mentioned by the others. Davis suggests: "It seems to be more probable that all three were independent, but used largely the language of the gospel narrative which had become current; while at the same time they felt free to use their own words because they were conscious of being fully acquainted with the facts." In addition to the oral tradition of the Church there were written records of the life and teaching of Jesus current in the Church. Luke 1: 1–4.

The Gospel According to John. John's Gospel tells of the Judean ministry of Jesus, which is omitted

in the Synoptic narratives, and its material is arranged to carry out its purpose of revealing Jesus as the Son of God. But John assumed that his readers knew what is told about Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. John's Gospel is not a substitute for the three earlier Gospels, but is a supplement to these Gospels and in a sense an interpretation of them.

The Date of the Gospels. There is a divergence of views concerning the time when the Gospels were written. There is little doubt that the Synoptic Gospels were written before the fall of Jerusalem, that is, before A.D. 70. Matthew B. Riddle suggests this interesting statement: "If a definite theory is necessary, it may be surmised that Luke wrote during the first imprisonment of Paul (A.D. 61–62), that Mark penned his Gospel immediately after Paul's temporary release, while Matthew prepared the Greek copy of his narrative about the same time, to meet the wants of Greek-speaking Christians." John's Gospel was the latest, and was written toward the end of the first century.

Summary. The disciples who went about preaching the gospel told the story of Jesus' life and character and teaching. They preached Jesus. As personal witnesses, or as those who had received the gospel from witnesses who had been with Jesus and learned of him, they told the story of their Lord and Saviour. As time elapsed and the eyewitnesses of these things were passing away, the importance of putting this testimony concerning Jesus into perma-

nent and authoritative form was recognized, and this testimony of the apostles and eyewitnesses was recorded in the Gospels to be preserved for future generations. Each Gospel was written for its own special purpose, drawing from the common or current testimony concerning Jesus, but shaped by its own purpose and supplemented from its own sources. Three of these narratives or Gospels have so much in common that they are known as the Synoptic Gospels, and are thus distinguished from John's Gospel, which is unique. These four Gospels have preserved for the Church through the centuries the testimony concerning the kind of man Jesus was, the kind of deeds he did, and what he taught.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Why would the Christian Church need a written record of the life and teaching of Jesus?

2. What written records of Jesus' life and teaching have been preserved in the New Testament?

3. From what sources did the writers of these New Testament books draw their materials? See the article in a Bible dictionary on "The Gospels," or study the introduction to one of the Gospels in a commentary.

4. State the purpose of each of the four Gospels. See the article on the "Gospels" in a Bible dictionary, or articles on the separate Gospels, or consult a commentary.

5. Which are the Synoptic Gospels and why are they so called?

6. Find a passage describing an event or incident which is common to two or more of the Synoptic Gospels, and note each variation in the language in the different accounts.

7. By means of a harmony of the Gospels note the events described in John's Gospel which are not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels.

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XXII

THE SYNOPTIC STORY OF JESUS

Scripture Material to Be Read: Matt., chs. 1 to 4: Luke, chs. 1 to 4; 10; 15: 16; The Gospel According to Mark

The Problem of the Chapter. Without attempting to arrange the events in exact chronological order, and without trying to make a harmony of the three Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, what is, in brief, the story of Jesus which is told in our three Synoptic Gospels?

The Birth and Boyhood of Jesus. Both Matthew and Luke give the genealogy of Jesus. Matthew traces Jesus' ancestry back to Abraham through David, because he was concerned about Jesus' being the son of David, and so the promised King or Messiah, and about his being the son of Abraham because he was the seed of Abraham according to the covenant promise. Luke, on the other hand, traces Jesus' ancestry back to David, Abraham, and Adam. These genealogies are different at many points. We cannot here take up the problem of the variations between the names in the two lists. Matthew's genealogy is that of royal succession, about which he was concerned. The suggestion has been made that the genealogy in Luke is that of

Mary, the daughter of Heli, while that of Matthew is the genealogy of Joseph. Thus Jesus was both legal and actual "son of David" and son of Abraham.

The Gospels teach plainly the supernatural character of Jesus' birth and mission. The forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist, was a child of promise especially sent to prepare the way for him. Luke 1: 5–25. That Mary was to be the mother of the Saviour was announced to her, Luke 1: 26–38, and also to Joseph, who was to protect Mary until her child was born and to be the foster father of her son, Matt. 1: 18–25.

While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, where they had gone for the enrollment commanded by Cæsar Augustus, Jesus was born. His birth was supernaturally announced by an angel to shepherds who were watching in the field, and they came and worshiped him. Wise Men in the East saw a star that told them of his birth and came from afar to lay their gifts at his feet. When Herod the king sought to destroy this heir to the throne of Israel, Joseph, warned by an angel, sought refuge for his wife and her child in Egypt, where they remained until after Herod's death. Instead of returning to Bethlehem, Joseph and his family went back to their home in Nazareth, where Jesus grew up.

Only Luke tells us anything of Jesus' boyhood, and what he tells is brief. Jesus was brought up as a child in a godly Jewish home. At the age of twelve he accompanied Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem for the celebration of the feast of the passover. While there Jesus indicated his recognition of his

Father in heaven and a consciousness of a life mission. But this sense of relationship to God did not interfere with his return to Nazareth as an obedient son in the home. Through the successive years of youth Jesus developed physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. Luke 2: 40–52.

Jesus' Baptism and Temptation. The Gospels tell us nothing further of the eighteen years which followed the visit to the Temple at the age of twelve. We next find him, at the age of thirty, presenting himself for baptism at the hands of John, who was his forerunner. His baptism expressed his purpose "to fulfil all righteousness," and marked his entrance upon his public ministry as the Messiah and Saviour. His baptism, or dedication to service, was followed by the testing in the wilderness in which he showed his unwavering purpose, his clearness of vision, and his absolute devotion to the mission the Father had given him.

The entire story of Jesus up to this point is passed over in silence in the Gospel by John, clearly indicating that John thought it unnecessary to repeat this part of the story which had already been recorded and which was known to all Christians. But at this point we find also that the Synoptic Gospels pass over a portion of Jesus' life and ministry which John describes. This is Jesus' early Judean ministry which covered nearly a year.

The Galilæan Ministry of Jesus. When John the Baptist was put into prison by Herod the tetrarch,

Jesus left Judea and went into Galilee. Matt. 4: 12; Mark, 1: 14; Luke 3: 19, 20; 4: 14. He was rejected at Nazareth and went to Capernaum, which he made his home. Here he called his disciples who were to be his companions, listening to his teaching, learning to know his character, studying his example, in preparation for their work as witnesses and heralds of the gospel.

Jesus became known as the great Miracle Worker. He healed the sick, thus showing his power over disease. He even cleansed the leper, who suffered from the most hopeless disease of his day. He not only healed the sick who were brought to him, but he spoke the word which at a distance brought restoration to health. His authority over nature was shown by his stilling the storm; his power over evil spirits, by casting out demons; and his power even over death, by the restoration of the son of the woman at Nain and the raising of the daughter of Jairus. His mighty works led his disciples to say, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" The multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel." The people flocked after him in such multitudes that he was thronged by them. He could not come near a village without word of his arrival being spread abroad and a great multitude assembling.

Jesus was also known as the Teacher. Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount, chs. 5; 6; 7, gives us a comprehensive view of Jesus' teaching. Here we find the wonderful statement of spiritual truth in the Beatitudes, the analogies of the salt and

the light, the application of the Commandments to motives and feelings, the call to sincerity and simplicity, the substitution of forbearance and forgiveness and generosity for the law of retaliation of the fathers, an argument for God's care for men on the ground that God cares even for the birds and flowers, the call to disciples to put first things first—the body before raiment, the soul before the body, the Kingdom of God before material possessions and worldly honor, the demand for works that express righteousness of heart, insistence upon conduct rather than upon profession, and exposure of the folly of hearing without doing. The multitudes were amazed at his teaching, "for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

The Opposition to Jesus and the Training of the Twelve. Beneath the tide of Jesus' wonderful popularity as Healer and Teacher, there was an undercurrent of opposition. This is brought out in the Synoptic Gospels, but Mark develops it with the greatest clearness and directness, chs. 2; 3. To meet the opposition organized against him, Jesus began the training of the Twelve, who were to carry on his work after his death and resurrection. While he still taught the people, his chief work was the training of the Twelve, whom he not only taught but also sent out on practice missions, so that under his direction they might have that experience which would fit them for their work after his departure.

The feeding of the five thousand, recorded in all the Gospels, marks the turning of the tide in the

popularity of Jesus. The multitudes began to leave him because he would not satisfy their material ideas concerning his Kingdom. The censoriousness of Jesus' enemies and their eagerness to find in his teaching the ground for accusing him, led him to use parables in his teaching so that only the disciples who were ready for the truth would really understand what he meant. Thus he taught with a special view to the training of the Twelve and to avoiding unnecessary friction with his opponents.

Growing opposition and the fickleness of the multitudes led Jesus to withdraw from time to time from the region which had been the chief scene of his ministry. He went to the borders of Tyre and Sidon where he healed the daughter of the Syrophœnician woman because of her faith. He visited the region of Decapolis, that district beyond the Jordan in which was to be found Greek culture, for these cities had been founded by followers of Alexander the Great. Here Jesus wrought many miracles of healing, and taught.

Through their association with Jesus, the disciples were gradually led to a clear realization of the greatness of their Master. Amidst the discussion and debate and difference of opinion concerning Jesus, the disciples, through Peter as their spokesman, confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matt. 16: 16.

The Shadow of the Cross. When the disciples were led to declare their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus began to break to them the disconcerting news

that he was to be rejected by the nation, arrested and brought to trial by the Jewish leaders, and put to death. His ministry was carried on under the shadow of the cross. Both Jesus and his disciples had need of light in the shadow. Peter and James and John were permitted to behold the glory of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, while Jesus talked with Moses and Elijah concerning his approaching suffering and death.

The plain teaching of Jesus concerning his suffering and death did not impress his disciples as it should have; they were still thinking of an earthly kingdom and were quarreling among themselves concerning their relative positions in the Kingdom. Jesus therefore not only taught the truth they needed to know as the basis for their message later but also sought to develop in his disciples those attitudes and motives and ideals and standards of conduct which would make them truly his representatives in the world.

In Perea. Jesus knew that the end was drawing near. He made his final departure from Galilee and set his face toward Jerusalem. Luke 9: 51. His journey led by way of the region beyond Jordan and south of Decapolis, which is known as Perea, and this period of Jesus' life is often called his Perean ministry. In Perea he taught the parables of the Great Supper, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Silver, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, the Pharisee and the Publican. Here he blessed the little children and talked with the rich young ruler. As he approached Jerusalem he talked with his disciples again about

his suffering and death, although they could not and would not understand. He passed through the city of Jericho, where he was the guest of Zacchæus, and near which he healed the blind men.

The Last Week. Jesus came to Bethany, which he made his headquarters during the week of his death. Great crowds had followed him as he drew near to Jerusalem, and on Sunday he rode into the city as King, the multitudes shouting their hosannas. On Monday he showed his authority by cleansing the Temple. Tuesday was spent in conflict with the Jewish leaders and in the instruction of his disciples. Then he taught the great parables of the Ten Virgins, the Talents, and the Last Judgment. While the Jewish leaders were desperately seeking a way to arrest and condemn Jesus to death, he spent Wednesday in retirement in Bethany. On Thursday evening he kept the passover with his disciples, in connection with which he established the Lord's Supper. Then he retired with the Eleven to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he went through that terrible struggle which involved sorrow beyond description. In the night Judas led Jesus' enemies to the Garden, where Jesus voluntarily gave himself up, for his hour had come. His arrest and trial followed. He was condemned by the Jewish sanhedrin, handed over to the soldiers by Pontius Pilate, led forth to Calvary, and crucified.

His Resurrection and Ascension. In spite of all that Jesus had said, the disciples seemed unpre-

pared for the terrible disappointment of his death. With him their hopes were buried; their great expectations seemed now like idle dreams. The sorrow of the disciples, however, did not last long. After a day spent in hopeless melancholy, on the third day word came that the tomb of Jesus was empty. Jesus had arisen from the dead as he had told the disciples. He appeared from time to time to a few, to the Twelve, or to larger groups, until he had given convincing evidence of the reality of his resurrection.

At the time of his appearance to a multitude of disciples in Galilee he gave them the Great Commission, Matt. 28: 16–20; Mark 16: 15–18, which has been called the "marching orders of the Church." Luke's conclusion to his Gospel brings the Synoptic story to an end: "And he led them out until they were over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God." Luke 24: 50–53.

Summary. According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus was a supernatural son of Mary, and the foster son of Joseph, of the royal and covenant line of Israel. He was brought up as a boy in Nazareth. At the age of thirty he began his public ministry with his baptism and temptation. He became a popular teacher who impressed the people by his miracles. When the tide of popularity turned he gave his

attention primarily to the training of the Twelve, whom he prepared to carry on his work after his departure. He foretold his suffering and death and bravely went to Jerusalem where he knew the cross awaited him. There he was arrested, condemned, and crucified. He rose the third day, proved the reality of his resurrection to his disciples, gave them the Great Commission, and ascended into heaven, leaving his work in the world to be carried on by his disciples under his direction through the Holy Spirit.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Which of the Synoptic Gospels tell of Jesus' birth? Find out by examining the Gospels themselves.

2. Name the supernatural elements in the Synoptic story of Jesus' birth. Base your statement upon the records of the Synoptic Gospels.

3. Which Gospel tells of Jesus' boyhood? Find the answer by examining the Synoptic Gospels themselves. What attitude toward God on the part of Jesus is shown in the account of his boyhood? Consult a life of Christ or a commentary for an interpretation of the passage.

4. What important period of Jesus' early ministry is not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels? Consult a harmony of the Gospels, the outline harmony in Andrews' "The Life of Our Lord," or "A Harmony of the Gospels," by Stevens and Burton.

5. Prepare a brief statement concerning Jesus the Teacher as he is presented in the Synoptic Gospels.

6. Prepare a brief story of Jesus the Worker of Miracles as his story is told in the Synoptic Gospels.

7. What was the effect of the waning of Jesus' popularity upon his ministry?

8. What would you say was Jesus' greatest achievement as a teacher? Tell why.

9. From a harmony of the Gospels, tell the important events in the last week of Jesus' ministry as narrated in the Synoptic Gospels.

10. Make a list of the appearances of the risen Jesus recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. See a harmony of the Gospels.

11. What is the Great Commission and where is it found?

12. Compare the number of chapters in the Synoptic Gospels given to the last week of Jesus' ministry with the total number of chapters in the Synoptic Gospels. What conclusion do you draw from these figures concerning the importance of the suffering and death of Jesus in the minds of the writers of the Gospels?

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews

James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XXIII

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

Scripture Material to Be Read: The Gospel According to John

The Problem of the Chapter. What is the testimony of John's Gospel concerning Jesus?

A Testimony. John's Gospel is well called a testimony to Christ, for the Gospel was written to bear witness to Jesus as the Son of God. This fact will be impressed upon any student who will read the Gospel through at one sitting. After reading the story of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, the testimony of John makes a deep impression. This Gospel explains the significance of much which is merely narrated in the other Gospels. The Fourth Gospel is an interpretation. John seems to go back over the life of Jesus as he remembers his Lord's earthly ministry and summons witness after witness to tell the impression which Jesus made upon them. It is this testimony which we are to consider in this Gospel.

The Prologue. Chapter 1: 1–18 is usually called the prologue to John's Gospel. The other Gospels begin with the annunciation or the birth or the beginning of Jesus' ministry, but John goes back to

eternity. "In the beginning was the Word," or in the Greek the *logos*. This word has been used by Greek philosophers in special senses, but it will be sufficient here to say that by the *logos* or Word, John means the Son of God before the incarnation. The Word was divine, for "the Word was God." The Word was Creator, Life, and Light, and this eternal Word, which "was in the beginning with God" and was God, became flesh and dwelt among men. Those who had eyes to see beheld his divine glory, but others disbelieved and rejected him. To those who received him he offered eternal life and divine sonship. He is the Revealer of God. This eternal Son of God is the Jesus who was introduced to the world by John the Baptist.

Thus the Gospel according to John assumes the story of the incarnation which is told in the Gospels by Matthew and Luke, the story of how the Word became flesh and dwelt among men.

The Testimony of John the Baptist. The first witness to Jesus which John summons is John the Baptist, who was the God-appointed forerunner of Jesus. John 1: 19–35. Read also ch. 3: 22–30. All classes of Jews recognized John as one of the greatest of the prophets, but John declared that he was only a voice announcing the coming of the Christ; compared with Jesus, he was the lowest of servants, unworthy to loose the strings of Jesus' sandals. He bore witness that he knew that Jesus was the Christ and the Son of God because he had seen the Spirit of God descend upon him. He also

pointed Jesus out to some of his disciples as the Lamb of God who was to take away the sins of the world.

The Testimony of the First Disciples. John pointed two of his disciples to Jesus. One of these was Andrew, and supposedly the other was John, the writer of the Gospel. An evening's association with Jesus convinced them that he was the Christ, and Andrew found his brother Simon and brought him to the Messiah. John 1: 35–42. Nathanael, another disciple, was led to confess his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Ch. 1: 43–51. At Cana of Galilee Jesus wrought the miracle of turning the water into wine, and as a result, "his disciples believed on him." Ch. 2: 1–11.

The Testimony of Jesus' Authority and Knowledge. John's Gospel testifies that Jesus himself claimed divine authority and possessed a knowledge which was superhuman. He assumed authority in the Temple and drove out those who desecrated it by turning the house of God into a house of merchandise. And he did not hesitate to call the Temple "my Father's house." Ch. 2: 13–17. He also claimed to be the incarnation of God, by referring to his body as the Temple of God, foretelling his death as a destruction of God's Temple, and his resurrection as the rebuilding of the Temple. Ch. 2: 18–23. His knowledge of the human heart was revealed in his not trusting himself to the people who professed to believe in him, for "he knew all men" and "needed

not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man."

The Testimony of Nicodemus. John next summons Nicodemus as a witness. This prominent Pharisee declared that Jesus must be a teacher who had come from God. John 3: 1, 2. In connection with the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, John tells of Jesus' teaching concerning himself, that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God, God's gift to a lost world for the salvation of all those who would believe on him. In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus declared his authority as a teacher on the ground that he bore witness of heavenly things, which he had seen, and that he had come down from heaven and was going back to heaven. John therefore declares that in Jesus is to be found eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The Testimony of the Samaritans. Next John tells of Jesus' journey to Galilee through Samaria and his interview with the woman by Jacob's well. She was convinced that he was the Christ, and many in Samaria believed, not only because of her word, but because they had heard for themselves. In this conversation with the woman Jesus declared that he was the source of the spiritual life: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." Ch. 4: 1–42.

The Testimony of Jesus' Mighty Works. Next John tells of some of the mighty works which bore witness to the character and mission of Jesus. He tells of the healing of the nobleman's son in Capernaum by the mere word spoken in Cana. This father and his family became believers in Jesus. Ch. 4: 46–54.

In Jerusalem by the pool of Bethesda Jesus healed the man who had been helpless for thirty-eight years. Ch: 5: 1–9. When this miracle of healing led to an encounter with the Jewish teachers Jesus appealed to his mighty works as evidence of his divine nature and authority. Ch. 5: 10–47.

Another mighty work was the feeding of the five thousand, the miracle which is recorded by all four Gospels. "When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world," and they wanted to make him their king. Ch. 6: 1–15. But the next day it was evident that the faith in Jesus which resulted from this miracle was not a real conviction concerning Jesus and his mission. A conversation followed in which Jesus declared that he was "the bread of life." He had come down from heaven as living manna.

Varying Opinions. This teaching about himself as the "bread of life" drew more clearly the line of division between those who truly believed in Jesus and those who disbelieved. His followers began to desert him until he turned to the Twelve and said, "Would ye also go away?" Peter, speaking for the

Twelve, as he so often did, gave their testimony concerning Jesus: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." Ch. 6: 66–69.

The unbelief and opposition in Judea was so great that Jesus avoided that region, for they sought to kill him. Even his own brothers did not believe in him. Ch. 7: 5. Thus John brings out the conflict between faith and unbelief which was characteristic of Jesus' ministry.

Jesus' Testimony to Himself. In connection with the testimony of his witnesses, John throughout his Gospel gives the testimony of Jesus to himself. In the seventh and eighth chapters of his Gospel particularly, John records the testimony of Jesus concerning himself. Jesus declared, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me." Ch. 7: 16. "Jesus therefore cried in the temple, teaching and saying, Ye both know me, and know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not." Ch. 7: 28. He came from God to give God's message to the world, and something about Jesus revealed his authority. When officers were sent to arrest him, they came back empty-handed. They could not lay hands on him for "never man so spake." Ch. 7: 32–46. Jesus taught that he was the Water of Life. Ch. 7: 37. He called himself the Light of the World. Ch. 8: 12.

Jesus' testimony to himself was rejected by the

Pharisees, ch. 8: 13, but in support of his own testimony to himself, Jesus claimed oneness with the Father: "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me," ch. 8: 16. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things." Ch. 8: 28. In the discussion which followed Jesus made one of the greatest statements concerning himself: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am." Ch. 8: 56–58.

The Testimony of the Man Born Blind. The ninth chapter of John tells the story of the man who was born blind and to whom Jesus gave sight. To the blind man who had the courage to stand up for Jesus even though he was for this deprived of all his rights as a Jew, Jesus made himself known as "the Son of God," ch. 9: 35.

Jesus the Good Shepherd. Looking forward to his death, Jesus taught that he was the Good Shepherd, who would voluntarily lay down his life for the sheep. Ch. 10. "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He claimed the power to give eternal life to those who believed in

him, v. 28, and announced, "I and the Father are one," v. 30. That the Jews understood that he claimed to be divine is clear, because they took up stones to kill him for blasphemy. Then Jesus appealed to his works as evidence for his claims.

Jesus the Resurrection and the Life. Again John combines the testimony of Jesus' works and Jesus' words concerning himself. Answering the call of Mary and Martha, Jesus went to Bethany, ch. 11, and raised Lazarus from the dead. This mighty work bore witness to Jesus, for at the grave Jesus prayed: "Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me." But in connection with this incident Jesus bore testimony to himself by declaring to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

Jesus' Approach to Death. Jesus withdrew to a retreat, ch. 11: 54, but he was not avoiding the issue, for when the time of the passover came, he went up to Jerusalem, although he knew that his life was being sought. He made Bethany his headquarters and there was anointed in preparation for his death. Ch. 12: 1–8. On Sunday he entered the city amidst the hosannas of the people. In spite of the acclaim of the multitudes and the interest shown in him by Greeks who had come to Jerusalem, Jesus

proclaimed his coming death as the Saviour, and the voice of God was heard, bearing the witness of the Father to Jesus, ch. 12: 28–30.

When Jesus celebrated the feast of the passover with his disciples, he knew that his hour had come. Ch. 13: 1. Although he was their Lord, he took the place of a servant and washed his disciples' feet. Then in great sorrow of heart he announced the betrayer, and spoke of his coming death. After this he uttered the wonderful teaching of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John and offered the prayer of the seventeenth chapter. Then he made his way to Gethsemane with the Eleven where he gave himself over to his enemies and was led away to trial. John quotes the testimony of Pilate who, after examining Jesus, declared, "I find no crime in him." Ch. 18.

The Death of Jesus. After being scourged, Jesus was led to Calvary where he was crucified. John describes Jesus' death as an eyewitness. Ch. 19: 25–27. His actual death was testified to by the soldiers, and his body was cared for by Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus and was laid in the tomb.

The Living Christ. John gives the testimony of many to the resurrection of Jesus: Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, John himself, and the disciples. The testimony of doubting Thomas is cited as of special value. Ch. 20: 24–29. And John adds that Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which he does not mention.

The last chapter of John's Gospel tells of Jesus' appearance to some of the disciples by the Sea of Galilee, when Jesus restored Peter to his place because of his threefold profession of his love. John reports Jesus' foretelling the death of Peter and corrects a misimpression, that Jesus had intimated that John was to live until the return of Jesus.

Thus John, omitting the story of the ascension which is told in the other Gospels and in The Acts, leaves us in the presence of the living Christ speaking of his return to the world. And the Gospel ends with the attestation that John's testimony is true. Ch. 21: 24.

Summary. John's Gospel was written as a testimony, to show that Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour. John summons as his witnesses John the Baptist, the first disciples, Nicodemus, the Samaritans, the man who was born blind, the multitudes, and even Jesus' enemies. He appeals also to Jesus' mighty works and Jesus' testimony concerning himself. He presents Jesus as the Lamb of God who died on the cross, rose again, and is the living Lord and Saviour, sustaining a vital relationship to the believer now, and waiting to welcome the believers to be with him forever in the Father's house.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. What is the prologue of John's Gospel, and what does it say about Jesus? Read the prologue, and consult a commentary and a dictionary of the Bible.

2. What does John mean by the "Word"?

3. Go through the Gospel of John and make a list of the witnesses whose testimony concerning Jesus he quotes.

4. Go through the Gospel of John and collect instances of Jesus' testimony to himself.

5. How does John's Gospel bear witness to the actual death of Jesus?

6. How does the Gospel of John bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus?

7. What is the last view of Jesus which is given in John's Gospel?

8. What is the Gospel's own statement concerning its purpose and where is this statement found?

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospel:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CHRIST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Scripture Material to Be Read: John 1: 1–18; 15: 1–8; I Cor. 15: 1–58; Eph. 1: 15–23; Phil. 2: 1–11; Col. 1: 9–23

The Problem of the Chapter. We have considered various books and groups of books of the New Testament. We have found that Jesus is the heart of all these books. The Gospels give the Church's testimony concerning Jesus. The Acts describes clearly the development of the Church as it carried on its work of telling men the story of Jesus and the way of salvation through faith in him. The Epistles give us the teaching of the Apostolic Church concerning Jesus and the Christian way of life. But what view of Jesus does the New Testament as a whole give us? Who and what is the Jesus of the New Testament? This is the question which we are to consider in this chapter.

The Preëxistent Son of God. According to the New Testament, the story of Jesus does not begin with his birth in Bethlehem. John begins his testimony to Jesus with the statement: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him

was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not." John 1: 1–5. Paul says that Christ Jesus "existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped." Phil. 2: 6. In his discussion with the Jewish leaders Jesus himself said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am." John 8: 58. Jesus "is the image of God." II Cor. 4: 4. He "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist." Col. 1: 15–17. The Epistle to the Hebrews presents the eternal Christ "the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever." Ch. 13: 8.

The Incarnation. The eternal Son of God, the Word who "was in the beginning with God," "became flesh, and dwelt among us," John 1: 14. He "who existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself." Phil. 2: 6–8. He "was born of the seed of David according to the flesh" and was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness." Rom. 1:

3, 4. Jesus called God his Father, and in a unique sense. The story of the coming of the Son of God in the flesh is told in Matt. 1: 18–25 and Luke 1: 5 to 2: 7, narratives which are marked for their simplicity, sweetness, and delicacy. The New Testament declares that "God was in Christ." II Cor. 5: 19. And Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," John 14: 9, and "I and the Father are one," John 10: 30.

Jesus the Man. Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, lived the normal life of a Jewish boy brought up in a reverent and godly home. His boyhood of which we have but one glimpse, Luke 2: 40–52, and his youth, eighteen "silent years," were spent in getting ready for his intensive ministry of three years. His baptism and his temptation finished this period of preparation and he was ready for his ministry. He was a true "son of man." "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Heb. 4: 15; 2: 18.

Jesus the Teacher and Wonder Worker. The New Testament presents Jesus as the great Teacher of whom it was said, "Never man so spake," John 7: 46. He was the great Miracle Worker who led men to ask in amazement, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Matt. 8: 27.

The Character of Jesus. The New Testament presents Jesus as the perfect Man. He was the exemplification of every virtue without its natural defects. His love was balanced by justice and wisdom. His indignation was guided by justice and love. His gentleness was balanced by his strength, and his strength by his gentleness. His character was free from negative defects. He could look even his bitterest enemies in the face and challenge them, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" John 8: 46. In human experience the holiest men are the most sensitive to their own defects, and yet the most careful students of the New Testament account of Jesus declare that they cannot find in Jesus' words or acts the least indication of any consciousness of sin in himself. Everywhere in the New Testament he is pointed to as the supreme example. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," is Paul's exhortation in Phil. 2: 5. In his First Epistle, John writes, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked." Ch. 2: 6. Jesus said, "I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." John 13: 15.

Jesus Crucified. The Jesus whose hands and feet were pierced with the nails and whose side was thrust through with the spear is the Jesus of the New Testament. Paul declared that among the Corinthians he "determined not to know anything . . . save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." I Cor. 2: 2. The four Gospels lay stress upon the death of Jesus by the space which they give to the story of the events

connected with his crucifixion. Jesus laid stress upon his death in the establishment of the Lord's Supper and the New Testament Church emphasized it by its celebration of the communion of the Lord's Supper. Jesus is ever the Jesus of Calvary. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15: 13. "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5: 8. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." Phil. 2: 8. Jesus said: "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." John 12: 23, 24. Jesus was he who "endured the cross, despising shame." Heb. 12: 2. To the Corinthians Paul wrote "For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." I Cor. 15: 3. In I Peter 2: 21–24 we read, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." The Jesus who appeared to John in Revelation was "the Living one" who "was dead." Rev. 1: 18. Thus throughout the

New Testament Jesus is the One who died, and whose death had special significance.

The Risen Jesus. The Gospels tell the story of Jesus' resurrection, and Luke in The Acts says that "he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days," Acts 1: 3. The whole New Testament proclaims a risen Jesus. He "was declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. 1: 4. In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, Paul teaches that the resurrection of Jesus is the pivot of the gospel. "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. . . . But now hath Christ been raised from the dead." I Cor. 15: 14, 20. The Jesus who sent his messages to the seven churches said, "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." Rev. 1: 17, 18. In I Peter we read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Ch. 1: 3. Paul writes, "That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." Eph. 1: 18–20. The apostles declared, "This Jesus did

God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." Acts 2: 32. The outstanding point in the teaching of the apostles was that they "proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead," Acts 4: 2.

The Ascended and Exalted Christ. "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." Mark 16: 19. "And he led them out until they were over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while ne blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God." Luke 24: 50–53. In The Acts, Luke adds, "And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." Acts 1: 10, 11. Yet the Jesus who left the world is also in the world, for he said to his disciples: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28: 18–20. Dying, Stephen said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of

man standing on the right hand of God." Acts 7: 56. Paul writes, "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2: 9–11. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens." Col. 1: 18–20. Of Jesus Paul says again, "He raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. 1: 20–23.

Believers and the Living Christ. The relation of the believer to the living Christ is represented in the fifteenth chapter of John in the words of Jesus: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing." V. 5. Jesus

does his work in the world largely through those who believe in him and abide in him. "For to me to live is Christ," writes Paul. In Gal. 2: 20 he says, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me."

So exalted is the place of Jesus in the New Testament that baptism is to be "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." And the New Testament benediction is, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you," I Cor. 16: 23, or "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all," II Cor. 13: 14, or "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ," Eph. 6: 23, 24.

Summary. The Jesus of the New Testament is the preëxistent Son of God, who was born in Bethlehem as the child of Mary, lived the life of a true child and boy and man, became the great Teacher and Miracle Worker, the perfect Example of manhood and the Revelation of God, died as the Saviour of men, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God in glory, but is also in a true sense present with believers in this world, and works through them and abides in them and they in him, the living Christ who was dead, but is alive forevermore, and will come again.

Questions for Study and Assignment

1. Why do we say that the New Testament teaches the preëxistence of Jesus? See John 1: 1–18; Phil. 2: 1–11.

2. What is meant by the incarnation? See Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," article on "Incarnation."

3. What reasons, based upon the teaching of the New Testament, can you give for the believing in the deity of Jesus? For a popular discussion of this question see "The Deity of Christ," by Robert E. Speer.

4. Prepare to describe briefly the character of Jesus. See "The Character of Jesus," by Charles E. Jefferson.

5. What place does the New Testament give to the death of Jesus? By means of a concordance look up every New Testament reference to the "cross" of Christ, to his "death," and to the fact that he "died."

6. What place does the New Testament give to the resurrection of Jesus? Look up the New Testament references to Jesus' resurrection. They can be found by means of a concordance.

7. Prepare to report on the question, "What place does the New Testament give to Jesus ascended and exalted?" Study Phil. 2: 1–11 and Col. 1: 9–23, with the aid of commentaries on these passages.

8. What is the Christian's relation to the living Christ as taught in John 15: 1–8? Consult a commentary on the passage. See also Andrew Murray's "Abide in Christ," especially the comment for the "Fourth Day."

The Books of the New Testament

The Gospels:—
According to Matthew
According to Mark
According to Luke
According to John
The Acts
Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy
II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
I Peter
II Peter
I John
II John
III John
Jude
Revelation

BIBLIOGRAPHY

No attempt can be made to give a complete list of reference books dealing with the questions which are discussed in the chapters of this book. Many books would probably not be available for students using this course, unless they were in touch with a special library. A limited list of volumes dealing with different phases of the subject may prove helpful, however.

The books which are listed represent somewhat different views. Some are more conservative than others.

Bible Dictionaries

A Bible dictionary will be found helpful in the study of many particular subjects or special questions referred to in the various chapters of this book. The following is a short list of Bible dictionaries which might be consulted:

"A Dictionary of the Bible," Davis. In one volume, and conservative. Westminster Press.

"A Dictionary of the Bible." Edited by Hastings. Five volumes. Signed articles by various specialists. Views vary according to the author. Scribners.

"International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia." Five volumes. Conservative. Howard-Severance Co.

"Dictionary of the Apostolic Church." Edited by Hastings. Two volumes. Views presented depend upon authors. Scribners.

General Commentaries

"A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Whole Bible," by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown. Conservative. Doran.

"The One Volume Bible Commentary," Dummelow. Not so conservative, but widely used. Macmillan.

"The Expositor's Bible." Edited by Nicoll. A series of volumes on various books of the Bible or groups of books. Its quality varies with the author of the particular book. Doran.

"The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges." A much-used series of commentaries on the books of the Bible. Brief, compact. Putnam.

Commentaries on Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, The Pastoral Epistles, and The General Epistles, by Erdman. Very readable, practical, and plain. Good to give ordinary students a knowledge of the books of the New Testament. Westminster Press.

"The Expositor's Greek Testament." A very valuable commentary for those who know some Greek. Five volumes. Dodd, Mead and Co.

Special Commentaries

The following commentaries are of especial value not only because of their critical discussion of the text and its interpretation, but also for the special essays dealing with problems considered in this course:

"Romans," by Sanday, in "The International Critical Commentary" series. Comments are on the

Greek text, but the "Detached Notes" are of great value to the student who does not know any Greek. Scribners.

"St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians," by Lightfoot. Comments are on the Greek text, but the Introductions and Dissertations are not beyond the serious student who does not know any Greek. Macmillan.

"St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians," by Lightfoot. Comments are on the Greek text, but as in the case of Galatians, the Introduction and Dissertations are wonderful sources of information for students. Macmillan.

Historical

"Luke the Historian in the Light of Research," by Robertson. Very valuable in connection with Chapter I, and for all historical references in The Acts. Subject and text indexes make this a practical reference book. Scribners.

"The Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," by Uhlhorn. This is a classic and will be found especially valuable. It is out of print but available in libraries. Scribners.

"The Church in the Roman Empire," by Ramsay, gives the results of research by a great scholar. His arguments are dominated by his "South Galatian" theory. The book is interesting reading, but is not easy to use as a reference book. Putnam.

"St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen," by Ramsay, has the same characteristics as the preceding volume. Putnam.

Lives of Paul

"The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul," by Conybeare and Howson. A wonderful book for information and perhaps the best book for students of this course. Crowell.

"The Life and Work of St. Paul," by Farrar. Dutton.

"The Life and Letters of St. Paul," by Smith. Doran.

"The Life of St. Paul," by Stalker. T. and T. Clark.

"The Origin of Paul's Religion," by Machen. A scholarly book dealing with special problems in connection with Paul's life and letters. Macmillan.

"Paul of Tarsus," by Glover. Doran.

The Life of Christ

"The Life of Our Lord Upon the Earth," by Andrews. A standard life of Christ with an outline harmony of the Gospels. Scribners.

"The Days of His Flesh," by Smith. Doran.

"The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," by Edersheim. Longmans, Green.

"The Life of Jesus Christ," by Stalker. Revell.

"A Harmony of the Gospels," by Stevens and Burton. Scribners.

The Person and Character of Jesus

"The Character of Jesus," by Jefferson. An interesting study of the traits in Jesus' character. Crowell.

"The Deity of Christ," by Speer. A helpful argument for the deity of Jesus. Revell.

"The Divinity of Christ in the Gospel of John," by Robertson. A study of the light which the Fourth Gospel throws upon the deity of Jesus. Revell.

"The Jesus of History," by Glover. Associated Press.

Doctrine in the New Testament

"The Theology of the New Testament," by Stevens. The Table of Contents and the Index will indicate where material related to this course of study will be found. Scribners.